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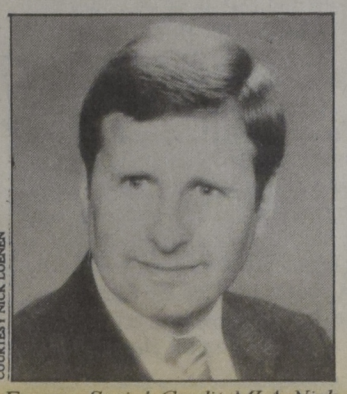
Keep God in the Charter, say MPs and political experts

Alan Doerksen

OTTAWA – When Svend Robinson brought a petition to Parliament several weeks ago calling for a reference to God to be removed from the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the public backlash against this was swift and surprising to some. Several MPs and political experts believe this is a reflection of the large number of Canadians who believe in God, as well as the Christian influence upon the history of Canada and on our major political parties.

Last month New Democratic MP Robinson drew much public attention by calling a press conference and then bringing a petition to Parliament asking for a reference to God to be taken from Canada's Charter. The petition, sponsored by the Humanist Association of Canada and signed by 1,000 people, claimed that the Charter's preamble "that reads: 'Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God...' is a discriminatory reference and offensive to millions of Canadians who are non-Christian or non-religious."

The petition went on to claim that such references to God "harms the public in general, in that such preferential endorsement by the government belies the whole intent and purpose of the Charter." Therefore, the petition called for the preamble to be changed to read: "Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of intellectual freedom and the rule of law...."



COURTESY NICK LOENEN

Former Social Credit MLA Nick Loenen.

At that time, Robinson was reprimanded by NDP leader Alexa McDonough for tabling the petition in such a public way. She made the following statement in the House of Commons: "The New Democratic Party of Canada ... is proud of our roots in the deep and resilient faith of our founders, leaders like J.S. Woodsworth, Tommy Douglas and Stanley Knowles. Today, together with my NDP caucus, I reaffirm our party's continued support for the inclusion in Canada's Constitution of the preamble referring to the supremacy of God."

Walt Lastewka, Liberal MP for St. Catharines, says he thinks the Charter's preamble "should stay the way it is." He explains that petitions are often read in the House of Commons, but they are not voted on and "there's no further discussion on it." Lastewka is a past parish council chair for a Ukrainian Catholic congregation.

But Senator Peggy Butts, a nun who represents Nova Scotia for the Liberals, sees the importance of mentioning the supremacy of God in the Charter because "the rule of law would have no sense" if it didn't come from a Supreme Being. "If you have the rule of man, you're inviting the Hitlers of the world.... I sure couldn't live through the rule of [human beings]."

Butts observes that the humanists' petition drew a lot of attention, but many more people – about six million – signed a petition related to Jubilee 2000, and that drew little attention. She speculates that the humanist petition drew attention because it was

See **REFERENCE** *page 2...*

Mouw, Stott among 125 leaders who endorse statement on the gospel

WHEATON, Ill. (EP) – Over 125 Christian leaders from across the spectrum of evangelicalism last month endorsed a newly drafted statement which affirms a common commitment to the central message of the Christian faith. Among the signers were Dr. Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary in California, and John Stott, popular author-speaker and retired Church of England priest.

The list of participants includes representatives from a wide range of evangelical denominations and organizations, and reads like a virtual "Who's Who" of the evangelical community. Among the many others endorsing the statement were Don Argue, Bill Bright, Roberta Hestenes, Oswald Hoffman, Bill Hybels, D. James Kennedy, Max Lucado, Luis Palau, Pat Robertson, Joseph Stowell and Joni Eareckson Tada.

MARIAN VAN TIL

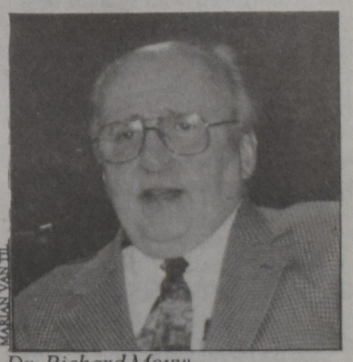
John Stott

"We have needed a statement like this for a long time, and I welcome it with joy," said Bill McCartney, founder of Promise Keepers.

Entitled *The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration*, the document took more than a year to write, according to John Woodbridge of Chicago's Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. "It grew out of a concern that the evangelical movement was in danger of becoming seriously divided," said Woodbridge. "In the process we were beginning to lose sight of the bedrock convictions about the gospel we hold in common." Woodbridge was part of the 15-member drafting committee which wrote the statement.

Theologian R.C. Sproul, who also served on the committee, said it's important to set forth the central beliefs which all evangelical Christians share. "We have vast differences among us in details of doctrine and worship and forms of church government, but our goal in this statement is to reaffirm the historic centre of evangelicalism. Nothing is more important than getting the gospel itself right."

Vancouver theologian James I. Packer added, "History has shown that the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ alone – which is the heart of the biblical message – regularly gets distorted or forgotten, and needs constant restatement."



MARIAN VAN TIL

Dr. Richard Mouw

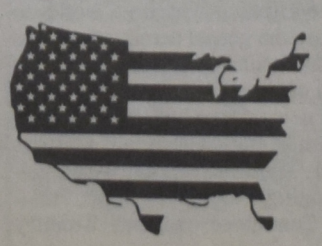
Unique Savior

The 3,400 word document begins by identifying the Gospel of Jesus Christ as "the central message of the Holy Scriptures ... the best and most important news that any human being ever hears."

See **STATEMENT** *page 2...*

Are you a patriot? Should you be?
PATRIOTISM:
Expressing love of country & our civic duty in the context of our true allegiance to Christ

pp. 11-18



Reference to God reflects Canada's Christian heritage

... *continued from page 1*

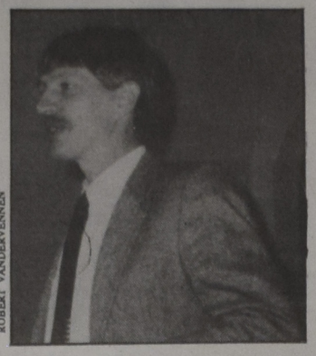
"something that startles."

The Reform Party has been open in its opposition to the petition. Chuck Strahl, Reform MP for Fraser Valley, spoke on this issue along with Robinson on the CBC Radio-1 "Canada AM" program in June.

A denial and an insult

"Socially, spiritually and historically, God still plays an important role in the lives of many Canadians," said Strahl. "To remove the word 'God' from the Constitution would indeed be a denial and an insult to who we are as a country. The reference to God should stay in the Constitution."

Strahl continued, "It's important in a democracy for all Canadians to present their views to their government, no matter what they are. The problem takes place when we try so hard not to offend people that we eliminate all traces of God from our society. Svend Robinson and the other humanists should take steps to affirm the rights of all people of faith to practice their religious beliefs in an open manner, free from persecution or intimidation, rather than try to eliminate one of the pillars of Canadian society."



ROBERT VANDERVENNEN

Prof. John Hiemstra

Strahl planned to draft a petition that calls on the government to keep God in the Charter.

Fellow Reform MP Eric Lowther was upset by the petition, especially since on that same day in June his party presented a petition signed by 40,000 people opposing child pornography. Despite the much higher number of people who signed that petition, it was virtually ignored by the media, while the humanist petition drew the media spotlight.

Lowther strongly supports the reference to God in the Charter because "Canada was founded on principles that recognize the supremacy of God" and human-made laws must be "in step with God's laws." Although there has been strong support for the Charter preamble, Lowther observes, "The problem in Canada today is we give lip service to God." He is disturbed that Christians don't speak up on issues such as child pornography.

More reticent than U.S.

Gordon Coggins, a retired St. Catharines, Ont., professor who ran for the NDP in the recent Ontario election, is in favor of keeping the Charter's preamble the way it is. "This country started as a Christian country and the majority of people say they are Christians," he says. Coggins is an active member of a Baptist church in St. Catharines, and was open about his faith in the recent election campaign.

Commenting on Robinson's role in presenting the recent petition, Coggins says, "He's a very honest guy. I just see him as saying, 'Oh, this is my job.'" Coggins acknowledges that "non-religious people feel threatened by God. You touch that fear button in people."

Canada has a history of keeping religion out of politics that goes back to before Confederation, says Coggins. This contrasts sharply to the United States, which includes the phrase "One nation under God" in its pledge of allegiance to the flag and the phrase "In God we trust" on its currency.

Besides the NDP, the Reform Party also has religious roots, observes Coggins. But he calls the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives "unprincipled opportunists."

John Hiemstra, a professor of political science at The King's University College in Edmonton, agrees that the Charter should continue to mention God. Recognizing the supremacy of God shows that "the state is limited," explains Hiemstra. "The old, pagan notions of ruler had the idea they were semi-divine."

Canada's British North America (BNA) Act makes no references to God because it was a technical document which explains how the new country would work, says Hiemstra. But he notes that "the preface [of the BNA] says we will have a Constitution similar in principle to the U.K. With that phrase, we inherit that whole system. That's where God is recognized in the Constitution."

Hiemstra believes the recent petition became a lightning rod for public sentiment partly because people are uneasy with the changing role of religion in public life.

Despite the humanist petition's claim that millions of Canadians are non-religious, Hiemstra counters that "opinion polls still say 80 per cent of Canadians believe in God." Therefore, changing the Charter's preamble "would be quite unpopular. People are quite sensitive on that question."

Dogmatic secularism

Hiemstra asserts that all of Canada's major political parties, except for the Bloc Quebecois, have Christian connections in their histories. But, he adds, "none of them wanted to be explicitly Christian." For instance, the Liberals have tended to be tied to Catholics since the time of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and P.C.s have been oriented more toward Protestants. The NDP has been influenced much by the "social gospel," and Reform Leader Preston Manning is an evangelical Christian but has avoided imprinting his personal religious views on his party.

Even with those historical religious connections, Hiemstra asserts that "Canada is a dogmatically secular society.... We go to church on Sunday, but politics should not be involved in religion." Hiemstra believes the roots of this are in the Enlightenment.

Like Coggins, Hiemstra sees a big difference south of the border. "That dogmatic secularism is being opposed on all sides by Christians in the States."

Hiemstra claims no party affiliation, and says he votes based on his Christian principles for the candidate he feels is the best.

Symbolic importance

Nick Loenen, a former Social Credit MLA in Richmond, B.C., believes mentioning God in the Charter is "important symbolically.... Symbols are very important. When someone tramples on the Canadian flag, it touches something. Symbols signify everything we stand for."

Although the Charter's preamble might offend some who think religion has caused problems, "there was an overwhelming response from the Canadian public against removing that," Loenen asserts.

"Historically, Canada was founded on religious principles," he says. "Our society is losing some of its Christian influences. I think that is to the detriment of society. Our society needs to be infused by spiritual values." Loenen agrees that Canada is now dogmatically secular. "Increasingly, religion has less relevance than it used to."

The Social Credit party, although no longer a major force in Canada, contains many "social conservatives – people concerned about family values," says Loenen.

"The Reform Party of Canada has more of an inclination to allow blatant religious influences to penetrate," he observes. "There are a significant number of practising Christians within the Reform Party, probably more than in any other party," he says.

Loenen is no longer a "card-carrying" member of any party, and volunteers with Fair Voting B.C., a group concerned with changing Canada's voting system to allow proportional representation.

Statement affirms uniqueness of gospel message

... *continued from page 1*

A section entitled "The Gospel" sets forth Christ's sacrificial death on the cross as the sole basis of human salvation. "The heart of the Gospel is that our holy, loving Creator, confronted with human hostility and rebellion, has chosen in his own freedom and faithfulness to become our holy, living Redeemer and Restorer." The statement adds, "The Gospel calls us to live as obedient servants of Christ and as His emissaries in the world, doing justice, loving mercy and helping all in need."

A section called "Unity in the Gospel" urges Christians "to love each other despite differences of race, gender, privilege, and social, political and economic background." While frankly acknowledging that disagreements sometimes do exist among sincere Christians, it urges dialogue among those with different views, as long as such dialogue rejects all attempts to ignore or compromise God's revealed truth.

The uniqueness of the gospel message is summarized in a final section through 18 "Affirmations and Denials." Erwin Lutzer, drafting committee member and pastor of Chicago's historic Moody Memorial Church, explained, "Our purpose in this section was to state as clearly as possible not only what the Gospel says, but what it does not say."

Television talk show host John Ankerberg, who also served on the drafting committee, added, "The Christian church is always in danger of diluting its message. This is especially true today amidst rampant secularism and non-Christian spirituality."

Jerry Falwell, chancellor of Liberty University, noted, "It is the responsibility of each generation to deliver to the next a simple, undiluted, biblically accurate definition of the everlasting Gospel of Christ."

Unity and historical impact

The document is a living example of evangelical unity, noted some of the signers. That unity is important, explained Dallas pastor Tony Evans, whose organization The Urban Alternative works to share the gospel across ethnic and racial boundaries. "This document not only gives the world the greatest news it ever had, but it does so from a unified church," said Evans. "This is something we are celebrating."

Committee member Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Alabama, noted that the document is not a call for institutional ecumenism. "We are not calling for any kind of organizational unity," he said. "Our oneness is in Christ, as this document makes clear. It is a statement of evangelical unity focused on the Gospel."

Kay Arthur, co-founder of Precept Ministries, welcomed the new statement. "Many people are confused about what the Bible really teaches, and whether or not it even matters," she said. "But it does matter, and if we miss its central message our study of the Bible misses the mark."

Charles Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship, believes the document will have great historic value. "When historians record the events of this era, they will surely take note of this statement as one of the truly momentous accomplishments of evangelicalism," he predicted. "It stands squarely upon the historic Christian faith which has energized Christians from the first century until now. Nothing could be more important to challenge the church for the new millennium."

Dispute over ice cream sees two Christians jailed

Pakistani Christian brothers charged with blasphemy

Barbara G. Baker

ISTANBUL (Compass) — Two Pakistani Christian brothers have been jailed on charges that they blasphemed against the prophet Mohammed during a dispute over ice cream service. A vendor refused to serve the Christians in the same bowls used by Muslims.

"I do not have any bowls for Christians," complainant Maqsood Ahmed reportedly told the two brothers when they approached him to buy ice cream. "If you want to buy ice cream from me, you must bring your own bowls."

Saleem and Rasheed Masih were arrested by local police on May 29 and 30, respectively, in Sabu Mohaal, Nia Pind, near the city of Pasrur, in Punjab province. They have been imprisoned in the Sialkot Central Jail since June 2, the Lahore-based Centre for Legal Aid Assistance & Settlement (CLAAS) reported.

Christians contaminate

Ahmed later told the local station house officer, Tahir Majeed Khan, that the Christian brothers had become angry and made "bad remarks" against Islam and Mohammed. A First Information Report (FIR) dated June 1 was filed at the police station, charging the two brothers under Section 295-C of the Pakistan penal code. Conviction under this statute requires a mandatory execution sentence.

Many strictly orthodox Muslims consider dishes and utensils used by Christians contaminated, since they may have been used to consume pork or alcohol, which are forbidden in Islam.

A danger zone

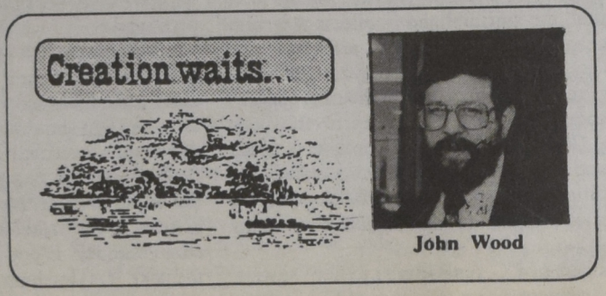
According to Safraz Taj, the Gujranwala representative of the Justice and Peace Commission sponsored by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Pakistan, the families of the two brothers have fled their homes for fear of retaliation by local Muslim extremists. "The families are terrified," Taj told Compass, "so they have moved away."

However, he noted, "Some Muslims are siding with the Christian family to help and try to solve this situation. They know these are all false statements that have been given at the police station." The family is still trying to find a lawyer willing to represent the case, Taj said.

According to CLAAS co-ordinator Joseph Francis, a joint fact-finding team from his centre and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) expects to research the case later in July. At present the area is considered a danger zone, however, since Pasrur is along the Indian border, close to the fighting in neighboring Kashmir.

Rasheed, 32, is married with five children. His brother Saleem, 28, has a wife and three children.

Alzheimer's of the ear



John Wood

Do you appreciate fine musical performance? I do, although my sensitivity is dulled by a severe hearing loss in the upper frequencies. There is music all around us, if we listen. Canadian musical scholar and composer Murray Schafer uses the term "soundscape" to describe this aural world. We seldom notice this sound world, but it pulses around us at all times. Each place has its signature sounds and, interestingly, silences.

For centuries humanity has tuned its ear by the sounds of nature. These earth sounds, from water, wind and animal instruments wrap us from birth to death. Lately these sounds have been changing in volume, source, and character. The *biophany* of animal sounds, as it was recently called, is being supplemented by other music.

A noisy place

There is virtually nowhere one can go to escape the sounds of modern society. White noise fills both urban and rural landscapes. I am surrounded by it now as I write. The computer fan whirs in the foreground. Behind it hisses the air conditioning, and from outside the building come the varied sounds of commerce. Automobile, truck and rail traffic rumble on the ground, aircraft in the sky. We cover this white noise with radio, taped music or the new noise cancellation technology.

In doing so the biophany grows faint. For me, the combination of high-frequency sound loss and this new "industrophany" means I seldom hear nature's sounds. Bird song is reduced to a few raucous calls of jays, crows or magpies. Crickets and the other insects I study are almost voiceless to me. But missing a little sound isn't such a big deal – or is it?

As bad as memory loss

The paradoxical thing today is that we are not only missing more sounds, but we are missing silence as well. And the loss of silence, as Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. pointed out a few years ago (*Christianity Today*, July 17, 1995, p. 42) "is as serious as a loss of memory and just as disorienting." The natural, God-ordained rhythm of work and rest, he points out, is complimented by one of sound and silence. We are slowly losing that rhythm, in little steps that we notice only with great effort. And we are losing it all across the sound spectrum. The silence is going and the biophany is going, to be replaced by a cacophony of human-generated noise. This is the sound of our loss.

Sound and silence play remarkable roles in our lives. We use both to communicate. And as Elijah, Job, David, and others remind us God speaks to us in both, and thus our liturgies use (or should use) both. So, missing a little sound (or silence) might be a very big deal for us.

Margaret Guenther has said that "our greed for sound is an addiction. We wrap noise around us like a blanket, insulating ourselves from one another and from God." But this soundscape we have created is not just one of life's incidentals. It comes as a consequence of our choices, and it has effects on us we might not easily notice. Where is the silent space for prayer? Where do we stop sounding off long enough to hear the other creatures praise their creator?

A sabbath of silence

We occasionally observe public moments of silence when tragic events overtake us. But these are infrequent and notably exceptional. Do we need a sound Sabbath, a great day of listening? It would be a time for hearing other voices and other speech. It would be a time to be still. The Psalmist says that there are voices without words that we need to hear. I don't think that stepping out of an air-conditioned car at a majestic overlook and hurriedly scanning it all with the video camera was the listening David recommended.

Wilderness has largely ceased to exist, even in Canada. In our 24-hour, 7-days-a-week culture we must be deliberate in finding a little room for sounds and silence.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton, Alberta.

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Editorial

Tradition and Abraham's knife

Kingship and continuity

In Shakespeare's magnificent play *King Lear*, when the time approaches for the King to surrender his throne to the next generation, he tries to secure the future, to assure a continuity by asking his daughters to state the depth of their love and indebtedness to him.

But Lear's youngest daughter refuses to play the game, not because she loves him less, but....well, there are some things that cannot be commanded. To make a long story short, a few acts later, the King who tried to control the future is stripped of everything. We see him naked, filthy, abandoned on the heath, raging at the heavens. We all take the lesson to heart: to seek to render ourselves immortal by extending our reign beyond our mortal limits is arrogance.

Nevertheless, when faced with endings, we stubbornly create elaborate mechanisms and rituals of continuity. We try in various ways to secure the future.

Now, CC is by no means a kingdom. The extent and magnitude of its influence are rather puny. Bert Witvoet, our editor just retired, to the best of our knowledge, has never worn a crown or wielded a scepter. And don't expect to see him ranting like a madman on the golf course behind his house any time soon. Nevertheless, he may have shared with some others of us a certain anxiety about setting a course for the future, the kind that prompted Lear to his folly.

The people of Shakespeare's day tried to guarantee they were on the right track by tracing the authority of church and state back to some divinely ordained ancestor. The church, for example traced its authority back through the popes to St. Peter. This direct connection across time provided a kind of divine stamp of approval on the papacy and the monarchy. The Jews of Jesus' day similarly found security in the fact that they could trace their lineage back to Abraham.

Generations and publications

In many ways, culture and religion are at root nothing more than the way parents create continuity in time. We who are parents attempt to hand on to our children those vitally important values and structures that make life worth living, that endow it with harmony, dignity and justice. Every generation seeks to provide for the next the cultural capital, the spiritual and intellectual wealth that gives life meaning.

We moderns are no longer convinced by the old models of continuity, but we are anxious that the next generation is losing something vital that concerns the very meaning of life. Christians share this anxiety with all parents. It is this anxiety that has made such a success of, for example, William Bennett's *The Moral Compass*, a collection of stories designed to instill traditional values in our children.

An important part of CC's mission is to help sustain just this sort of continuity. CC is supposed to be a vehicle by which the Reformed tradition is spread to our contemporaries and to future generations as something solid to build on. As the editor of CC, Bert in his writing and selection has sought to model a Reformed way of understanding and living as a link between God's presence in the past and in the present, so that our children will continue in this way in the future.

Trapped by tradition?

Yet no matter how hard we try to pass on a living faith and instill in the next generation the norms and values we consider basic to a godly life and a just society, almost every generation at some point is confronted by children who accuse their parents of saddling them with dead traditions, of stifling their vitality and creativity with rules.

Last year I visited an exhibit by young Christian artists at Redeemer College (Ancaster, Ontario) and I was somewhat taken aback by how many works played with the imagery of being trapped in boxes. This may be explained as the influence of romanticism, which sees all norms as threats to creativity, but the artwork was by no means cliched. It was an authentic expression of the experience of our children.

There's more than a smidgen of truth to the theory of influence developed by Harold Bloom: he sees the good works of the fathers as a burden on the sons (I'm letting the sex-exclusive wording stand, because it's part of the Jewish-Freudian tradition). When we invest all our hope for the future in what we are able to pass on, we are literally making of ourselves and our works an indispensable lifeline. This lifeline becomes a chain if it binds our children to ourselves rather than to the true Source of life. It actually deprives the next generation of the opportunity to establish an authentic, personal link on their own initiative. It is not antinomianism (the view that all law deadens) that turns tradition into a prison; it is anxious parents who feel duty-bound to secure the future for their children.

At the very moment we presume to dispose over the mechanisms that will assure enlightenment, freedom, community, prosperity, direction and full, meaningful lives for the next generation – at that very moment all this vast, rich inheritance becomes a pit, a trap for them.

Values and violence

At its roots, Christianity has nothing in common with traditionalism. There are those who think that the solution to our present social disintegration is to build on the permanent values we have inherited from Athens, Rome and Jerusalem. When Jesus was crucified, however, he was judged by Greek philosophy to be a fool, by Roman law to be a criminal, and by Jewish ethics to be a blasphemer. In so judging him, the highest cultural achievements of human history conspired to reject God's grace. They thereby demonstrated their own fundamental violence, for they all sought to exclude precisely that which liberates humanity and makes history possible. This is what we do every time we try to secure the future by our own works.

The Jews of Jesus' day counted on the fact that they had Abraham as their father; and the fact that they were circumcised was seen as a sign and seal of that bond. But circumcision should have reminded them of the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. In circumcision a knife flashes between one generation and the next, touching the organ of generation. Rather than creating a fleshly bond between father and son, the knife cuts the human chain asunder. Blood flows between one generation and the next. It is God himself, through the Lamb he provides, who connects each generation to himself, and it is only from the vantage point of walking with him that the past begins to fall into place and that it becomes not a chain but a vast aquaduct conveying rivers of living water that divide to irrigate a great many gardens, each producing unique fruits.

Rehashed, revised ... reformed

Reformed people are not traditionalists; yet, we, too, seek to pass on what we see as foundational and true. We do not, however, expect or even wish the next generation to accept our understandings passively. Without forums like CC, however, such exchanges about the important things of life become very difficult. Yes, there are a number of academic journals in which professors and preachers discuss the meaning of the Reformed faith.

But such concern must not be just an exercise for academics. Unless it is something in which the entire community is involved, it will become distant from life; it will wither or petrify. A living tradition, even one that has inspired such concrete expressions as churches, schools, labor unions and political organs, needs to be constantly rehashed, revised, adapted and translated anew. In short, *reformed*.

Let me end with a series of questions connected to my theme.

1. Is CC's difficulty in getting younger readers a reflection on the malaise of these generations or an indication of CC's failings? Or are there larger social and cultural factors at work?

2. Is preserving Reformed traditions important? Or should we quietly melt away into North American evangelicalism?

3. What is unique and vital to the Reformed faith? What elements should be dropped or changed?

We hope that you, our readers, may wish to address some of these questions. You may contact Marian Van Til at: ccmneditor@aol.com or write us at the address on our masthead on this page.

Harry der Nederlanden

Harry der Nederlanden is a member of **Christian Courier**'*s editorial advisory committee and the Reformed Faith Witness board.*

Christian Courier

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- express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective;
- provide contact for the Christian community.

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There's good reason not to sympathize with Ludwig

I read with disbelief the news comment written by Bert Hielema ("Nose for News" column, CC, July 12) with regard to Wiebo Ludwig. This column concludes with: "A sad ending to a worthy effort." Mr. Hielema's comments are either made from being oblivious to the truth or totally insensitive to the many silent victims living across Canada and the U.S.A. who have endured Ludwig's wrath. I sincerely hope it is the former and would be shocked if it were the latter.

Anyone who has followed the tumultuous life of this deposed Christian Reformed minister since his clandestine departure from Ontario in the mid-80s fully understands that this current situation is but one more in a long string of conflicts Ludwig has initiated against the legal authorities of the land in an attempt to prove his contempt for authority.

This time, however, Ludwig has encountered something he can't control and is now in far too deep to run away from. Unlike the adults from the families currently living at Trickle Creek, "broken" into totally submission by Ludwig's relentless control, the oil company had the "nerve" and the "laws of the land" to stand up to him.

Ludwig's frustration and inability to control this situation has resulted in the predicament he now finds himself in: jail. For those who are concerned for loved ones trapped in the Ludwig cult, know that this oil fight is but a diversion from the real issue he has been so capable of hiding. Sadly, it had to come to the tragic murder of young Karman Willis to finally open up the emotional floodgate of other victims to the point where they have said "enough is enough."

Mirroring Waco

During the past month, a few of Ludwig's former victims – who endured his abusive recruitment tactics some 15 years ago, and thankfully escaped a fate similar to that of the helpless "families" at Trickle Creek – have reluctantly come forward to finally tell their story to the police.

Reading in a Christian paper a glowing report by a respected CC writer complimenting Ludwig's for "doing our dirty work, fighting the oil company" sends a clear message to these victims that many of the leaders of churches who turned a blind eye toward reports of Ludwig's bizarre and abusive behavior 15 years ago still do not want to believe the truth today.

Comparing Ludwig's plight to the accomplishments of Gandhi is an insult to the cause Gandhi stood for. There are several well-written, in-depth documentaries in the press and on the Internet today that would suggest drawing a parallel between Ludwig and David Koresh would be closer to the truth, and that Ludwig is the villain rather than the hero Hielema describes.

This is a very serious cult capable of mirroring Waco.

Come forward *now*

After this latest incident a coalition has been set up in Ontario made up of some of Ludwig's victims. The RCMP has been in contact with four people in Ontario on nearly a weekly basis since then. And I received the following e-mail note recently from the RCMP in Alberta:

Please note that the citizen group that has formed in this area [of Alberta] consists of volunteers as well as elected officials of municipal and county governments. They are revisiting with the greater community the past activity of W. LUDWIG over the 15 years he has lived in this area.

We are having people come forward with reports on activity the police had never even heard of. With so many people telling of threats, etc., you may want to speak to former victims of whom you are aware that now is the time to come forward.

Yes, it would be nice for police from here to go to Ontario and interview. The reality is that law enforcement needs people to come forward. For further information go onto the Internet to Alberta Report *and read the July 12th article on WL.*

Sgt. Dave MacKAY, Beaver Lodge RCMP.

Name withheld

The author, known to CC, fears possible retaliation for speaking out, and has evidence that supports that possibility. **MVT**

No room for sexist church leaders

Several times over the years we women have had to put up with negative comments made by Christian Reformed Church leaders. I believe most of them do not begin to understand women. Perhaps, therefore, those men who seem to think less of women [than of their own sex] ought to consider stepping down from their authoritative high chairs in the church.

Thea van Amerongen
London, Ontario

Christian Courier needs your special kind of help.

Our October 4, 1999, issue will focus on the problems and the joys of modern families. Among other features in this issue, we want to include some helpful insights into **life in a blended family.**

If you are a person with first-hand experiences in such a family (parent *or* child), would you consider sharing your story?

If so, please call our Managing Editor, Marian Van Til, as soon as possible. 1-800-969-4838. *We have a place for your story.* And modest remuneration.

Can't avoid 'doctrinal' sermons

Regarding the article "New Worship Forms Needed" (June 14, 1999): [Advising not to use] "churchy language" is a good point. To speak one way in church and another way outside the church is odd, to start with, but what is going to be the lowest common denominator as to what language to use?

About traditional hymns: I am part of a men's singing group which sings new songs, so I've gotten used to them, and I like a choice of songs. But to always be singing those of the latest Top 10 on the popular list may be somewhat hard to do. The good old standbys are always fun to sing, too.

Also on the list were doctrinal sermons: I do not know what the writer of the article had in mind when referring to "doctrinal preaching." But when a sermon is about Moses and the burning bush and it is explained who I AM is, you have a "doctrinal sermon." If the Lord's Prayer is explained and the question "Who is our Father in heaven?" is answered, you have a doctrinal statement. And if the subject is "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," again the answer is a doctrinal answer.

Out of the 12 articles of faith which [Reformed churches] use to show what the Bible has to say, doctrinal language is used. Tell me how one can get away with not being doctrinal! How can one not be doctrinal when speaking about 1 Corinthians 1:18, 23-24: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.... But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God."

I don't mean to start a fight; just some thoughts.

Jan Jansma
Port Alberni, B.C.

Wistful over Witvoet...

No, of course we haven't forgotten Bert Witvoet, nor his long and significant shaping of this paper. But we're waiting for the right moment to reflect, ruminate and reminisce. We've judged that to be after the July 17 gathering which will see him roasted and toasted – and which, as of this writing, hasn't happened yet.

Look for it in our next issue! (We'll throw in a picture or two, too.)

Marian Van Til, Managing Editor

Christian Courier

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2020 vision a goal of Vision 2020

Beth Jost Reimer

STOUFFVILLE, Ont. – What will the world look like in 20 years? For some 77 million people, it won't look like anything: a world of perpetual darkness, without light or color. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 45 million people in the world are currently blind. If more isn't done to fight the causes of blindness, particularly in developing countries, this number is expected to almost double by the year 2020.

80% of blindness fixable

Christian Blind Mission International-Canada, representing its many partner organizations, including the Christian Reformed Church, has joined forces with the WHO and an international coalition of non-governmental organizations in a campaign to eliminate avoidable blindness by the year 2020. The new initiative is called Vision 2020: The Right to Sight.

Eighty percent of the blindness in the world is avoidable; that is, it is either preventable or curable. "We already know what to do. The issue is getting the necessary treatment to the masses of people who need it. And in many cases, getting it to them in time," says Dave McComiskey, assistant national director CBMI-Canada. That's why 20 non-governmental organizations around the world have joined in the name of efficiency and effectiveness.

"This is the first time WHO and a broad base of international non-governmental blindness prevention organizations are working together in a concerted and collective effort" to try to eliminate the growing problem of blindness, says CBMI-Canada's national director, Art Brooker."In order to mobilize the necessary resources to prevent and treat these crippling conditions, we *must* all work together."

Five priorities

The coalition has identified five conditions as immediate priorities in the fight against preventable and curable blindness: cataracts, trachoma, onchocerciasis (river blindness), childhood blindness and low vision.

"The treatments available for curing and preventing blindness are some of the most effective and cost-effective in the medical and health fields," maintains McComiskey.

Half of all blindness is due to cataracts. Cataracts can be removed with an operation that takes a matter of minutes, and as part of CBMI projects, costs an average of a mere $27. Another 30 per cent of blindness is preventable, and according to McComiskey, "the medications needed to prevent blindness caused by trachoma, vitamin A deficiency in children and river blindness cost only pennies per person, including distribution."

Partner with the CRC

Christian Blind Mission International is working in partnership with the Christian Reformed Church in three projects in Africa: two are in Zimbabwe, the third in Botswana. These projects represent the core of CBMI's services: eye care for millions of the world's poorest people.

At the Masvingo Province Eye Care Program in Zimbabwe, more than 25,000 people receive treatment for eye problems each year. For thousands, this eye service means they will avoid years (in some cases, entire lifetimes) of blindness. And they will escape the heightened poverty that blindness brings with it in the developing world.

To hundreds of others, the CBMI/Christian Reformed Church program has given the precious gift of restored sight through cataract surgery.

CBMI has been partnering with like-minded organizations and churches for over 25 years. With Vision 2020, CBMI is broadening its co-operation beyond the Christian community. According to McComiskey, this in no way changes CBMI's own mandate of preaching the gospel in word and deed. "Jesus led the way in restoring sight," explains McComiskey. "We believe that Christians today should also show leadership in compassion for people who are poor and blind."

A fortunate, happy boy

If it hadn't been for the CBMI/CRC Masvingo Province Eye Care Program, Tinashe Bungu would likely be living without the sight in one eye. While playing with a stick, Tinashe received a severe eye injury. His need for professional care was urgent, and his mother took him to the nearest hospital – some 60 km away. Unfortunately, no one there could help the boy, so he was referred to the Masvingo Eye Care Program.

When Tinashe arrived at the clinic, CBMI ophthalmologist Dr. Jan Bollemeijer examined and treated Tinashe's eye. At last report, the boy was waiting three weeks before underwent surgery to remove a blinding traumatic cataract. Happily, his eye has been saved and his prospects of seeing again are good.

Tinashe is more fortunate than many children in the developing world. Some are born with cataracts and live their entire lives in darkness. Neither they nor their parents have any idea that a simple operation could give them their sight. Others go irreparably blind because they lack vitamin A in their diets.

The future for these children is grim. According to CBMI statistics, 90 per cent of blind children in the world never have the opportunity to go to school. Eighty per cent of blind adults are unemployed due to a lack of education and training.

Christian Blind Mission International and the Christian Reformed Church are changing the lives of people like Tinashe Bungu. Through Vision 2020 they are changing the world one life at a time.

Beth Jost Reimer is the communications writer for CBMI-Canada, whose headquarters are in Stouffville, Ontario.

Live and learn or:

Lessons acquired from the tattooed, body-pierced bell-bottomed, neon-haired young at a Christian arts festival

Intangible things

Heidi VanDerSlikke

We've just returned from a family camping trip and I have a renewed appreciation for such common blessings as flush toilets, daily showers and real coffee in non-plastic mugs. Of course camping offers its own simple pleasures, such as the smell of bacon cooking on the camp stove, the sound of crickets and bullfrogs in the night, and the peculiar appeal of a hot dog roasted over the campfire.

I should clarify that this was not the usual back-to-the-woods camp-out. This was camping in the midst of 25,000 other souls on the 575-acre Cornerstone Farm near Bushnell, Illinois. We had gathered for a five-day festival of faith and the arts, featuring especially, but not exclusively Christian music. As with any worthwhile endeavor, it proved to be a learning experience.

Close quarters

We are a farm family, and that being so, we're not used to living within earshot of our neighbors, even if they're hollering at the top of their lungs. However, at Cornerstone it required effort *not* to hear your neighbors' normal conversations. The tight circumstances taught us much about loving our fellow human beings.

Being from Ontario, we're also not used to Fahrenheit temperatures with three digits. The sensation was roughly the same as sitting in your car with the windows up on a summer day in the middle of an asphalt parking lot. So we also learned a lot about keeping our cool, literally and figuratively.

Exuberant hair and lively faith

Nevertheless, the concerts were great, the seminars interesting, and the neighborhood grew on you after a while. One of the most enjoyable aspects for me was the opportunity to observe the youth of today *en masse*. I learned much by watching them.

From person to person, their appearance differed widely, as did their tastes in music. The outrageous hairstyles fascinated me. Some of the more memorable heads sported yellow hair with blue polka dots, green hair with red stripes, or multicolored hair held in place (sort of) with an array of clothes-pins. In the words of American humorist/newspaper columnist Dave Barry, *I am not making this up!*

There was a surprising (to me) proliferation of tattoos, decorating both males and females in varying degrees of quantity as well as "artistic" quality. And then there was the clothing: Bell bottoms and hip-huggers are once again trendy, as they were when I was young. However these days, among adolescent males anyway, the brand of underwear that shows itself above one's pants is as important as the pants themselves.

A mistake to stereotype

Accessories range from incredibly gaudy hats to jewelry involving leather and chains that my collie would be proud to own. Add a few safety pins and/or earrings in some unlikely places and the ensemble is complete. Of course not all young people dress in these fashions outlandish to adults, and most of them don't put it all together in a given outfit. Still, their attire as a whole provided a visual smorgasbord of freaky styles.

But what these teenagers really taught me was that it's a mistake to stereotype any group of individuals, despite their stereotypical youthful uniforms. While some of these young people were rude and inconsiderate (as are some adults), others worked hard at being polite and friendly. Some were there for the excitement, others had come out of spiritual hunger. There seemed to be no correlation between commitment and fashion sense.

On the last morning I saw our next-door neighbors, a group of college-aged kids from Missouri, holding hands and joined in prayer. What a beautiful sight it was – proof that faith transcends the generations, and that God has no grandchildren.

Heidi VanderSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont., and enjoys writing.

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Canada's new opera house will put performance first

TORONTO (Canadian Scene) – In a recent unveiling of design plans for the Canadian Opera Company's new home, enjoyment by both audience and performers was the major consideration, said COC general director Richard Bradshaw and architect Jack Diamond.

For almost half a century the Canadian Opera Company (COC) has performed in theatres far below the best in opera house standards. Since 1961, the COC has been a tenant at Toronto's Hummingbird Centre (former O'Keefe Centre), which, visually and acoustically, falls far short of perfection. In spite of that, in recent years, the COC has achieved international recognition. Its own theatre, of sufficient quality to match the stature of its productions, has long been the dream of the COC and its supporters alike.

When in 1997 the Ontario government agreed to sell a prime site at the corner of Toronto's University Avenue and Queen Street West for $16 million, the COC commissioned architects (A.J. Diamond, Donald Schmitt and Company) to produce designs for an opera house.

Elegant and understated

The unveiled plans call for an acoustically correct, horseshoe-shaped, 2,000-seat auditorium in the best tradition of classical European opera houses. That obviously means allowing the singers and orchestra to be heard perfectly without electronic amplification.

The plan features a stage which is never more than 40 metres from the farthest seat, an orchestra pit that will seat enough musicians to perform even the most orchestrally demanding of operas, such as Wagner's "Ring" Cycle, and three separate stages.

In addition to its use as an opera house, the theatre will be eminently suitable as a venue for National Ballet performances and orchestral concerts.

While the design is elegant and contemporary, it is not intended as an overpowering addition to the cityscape, but as one which presents a friendly exterior, said architect Diamond. Glass walls will permit passers-by a view of the lobby and elegantly curved staircases sweeping to the balcony floors.

Several pledges have already been made toward the $130 million to build the opera house, and a public campaign will be mounted in the near future. Meanwhile, prominent citizens and some of the major media have expressed the view that the Ontario government should waive the $16 million land purchase fee, and that the city of Toronto and the federal government should also contribute to a national institution that continues to attract increasing audiences.

Study by conservative foundation links youth violence with hard rock

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — Hard rock music is like a virus in American culture contributing to growing youth violence, according to a report released July 8 by the conservative Free Congress Foundation. The report has been endorsed by 18 religious leaders.

The 18-page report, titled "There is a Virus Loose Within Our Culture: An Honest Look at Music's Impact," includes 140 footnotes citing social and behavioral-science research, survey data and other information.

The report does not endorse any specific policy proposals or action strategies, but is intended to "provide a solid, factual basis for whatever approach concerned parents and citizens wish to pursue to help America's youth," according to its author, Thomas Jipping, director of the Free Congress Foundation's Center for Law and Democracy.

Jipping says his report "absolutely demolishes" the music industry's claim that popular music does not negatively affect youth. The report notes that the Columbine killers idolized shock-rocker Marilyn Manson, as did other perpetrators in recent incidents of teen violence.

"No one, of course, argues that popular music is the sole cause of youth violence," the report says. "Something as complex as human behavior does not have a sole cause. The question is not whether popular music is the exclusive cause of youth violence (something no one seriously argues), but whether there is any 'basis in truth' for the proposition that some popular music makes a real contribution to youth violence (something only the music industry denies)."

Influence surpasses TV

The report found that music surpasses television as an influence in teenagers' lives. Studies show that teenagers listen to an estimated 10,500 hours of rock music between the seventh and 12th grades – 500 hours less than the total time they spend in school over 12 years.

The report says consumers of negative or destructive messages internalize them more than those who listen to more neutral messages. It contends that themes such as glorifying violence, sex and drug use "are now the rule rather than the exception" in popular rock and rap music.

Both Catholic and Protestant leaders have endorsed the report, including John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, and Paige Patterson, president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Simple poster effective for evangelism in China

BEIJING (Religion Today) – A simple poster of the cross has proved to be an effective evangelistic tool in China. Because millions of Chinese are illiterate, pictorial Christian literature is a valuable tool to evangelists and lay ministers who travel to out-of-the-way rural areas and villages.

The Voice of the Martyrs recently transported some Bible materials to house church believers in the largely Communist country. Voice of the Martyrs, headquartered in North American in Oklahoma and in Mississauga, Ontario, was founded by former Romanian prisoner for Christ Dr. Richard Wurmbrand.

As the boxes were unloaded, the church members grew particularly excited over one of the gifts: a poster showing a cross atop a stony hill.

An 88-year-old woman has been witnessing for many years with the same poster, the Christians told VOM workers. She keeps the small red poster folded in a bag and carries it wherever she goes. Although the paper is tattered and taped together, she pulls it out regularly in the market or on the bus and uses it to preach the Gospel. The poster has only three words: *It is finished.* The Chinese sister tells people, "Mao couldn't say that, Deng Xiaoping could not say it, and you cannot say it — there is only one person who can say it and He is the Lord Jesus Christ." Many Chinese have become Christians because of her boldness, the church members told VOM.

What have *we* wrought?: Morse Code fades into history

SAN FRANCISCO (UP) – U.S. ship-to-shore telegraph, drowned out by the high-speed chattering of satellite communications, high frequency radios and e-mail, has emitted its last Globe Wireless. On July 12, an 89-year-old California communications company sent out what it billed as the last commercial maritime Morse Code message from North America, a terse sign-off that repeated the first words transmitted by the telegraph's inventor, Samuel F.B. Morse, 155 years ago: "What hath God wrought?" The message was sent from Globe Wireless's KFGS Marine station at Half Moon Bay south of San Francisco.

Gimme that ol' time religion

A conversation overheard between a computer user and a technical support person:

Tech Support: "All right...now double-click on the File Manager icon."

Customer: "That's why I hate this Windows - because of the icons - I'm a Protestant, and I don't believe in icons."

Tech Support: "Well, that's just an industry term sir. I don't believe it was meant to—"

Customer: "I don't care about any 'Industry Terms'. I don't believe in icons."

Tech Support: "Well...why don't you click on the 'little picture' of a filing cabinet...is 'little picture' OK?"

Customer: [click]

Tour de France fans confronted with 'ultimate race'

PARIS (Religion Today) Cycling fans at the Tour de France are reading about the spiritual journeys of athletes. *The Ultimate Race*, a booklet produced by the International Bible Society (IBS) tells readers that "life's greatest race begins and ends with the hope found in Jesus Christ," the ministry said.

Several French sports ministries and Christian volunteers are handing out 3,000 of the booklets to people lining the streets to watch the racers speed past. The ministry says it will print many more books for future races if the outreach is effective.

The interactive booklet provides a place to record the status of favorite cyclists on a map of the 4,000-mile race-route. It also includes testimonies from Christian cyclists about the importance of having a relationship with God.

International sports events can provide "a unique opportunity for local Christians to become involved in reaching diverse groups of people," Sue Hyde of the IBS said.

Advertise in our monthly Business Directory for only $25 plus GST.

For our Calendar of Events, please turn to page 27.

Reformed church retains ties with UCC

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (EP) — Despite a spirited debate over the unorthodox position of the United Church of Christ (UCC) on homosexuality, the Reformed Church in America (RCA) decided to retain its ties to that church during its June 10-16 general synod.

The debate on the RCA's relationship with the UCC was sparked by a request from Florida churches for the RCA to sever all ties with the UCC because of its stance on homosexuality. The proposal was denied by a substantial margin.

The RCA denominational committee which dealt with the issue recommended denial of the request to "avoid the precedent of severing ecumenical ties with other Christian denominations over differences regarding interpretation of Scripture on social and ethical matters."

Rev. Timothy Boeve, chairperson of the RCA's Commission on Christian Unity, and a pastor in California, called the vote encouraging. "The church affirmed the direction of the Reformed Church and did not allow diversity in the Christian church to keep us from our desire to make our oneness in Christ visible."

Status confessionis rejected

The Florida churches also proposed a measure to allow one group of churches to bring charges against another, and a measure calling for all RCA staff and professors of theology to resign if they cannot affirm a *status confessionis* (statement of beliefs essential to the Christian faith) on sexual ethics. Both were denied. A proposal by Midwest churches calling for an investigation of the UCC for alleged Unitarian beliefs was also turned away.

(A *status confessionis* is a theological declaration affirming a particular doctrine or practice needing to be absolutely present in an individual or organization for it to be considered Christian. It has been declared in a Christian church only twice this century, once by the German church in response to the Nazi state and then by South African churches in response to apartheid.)

Social action and new liturgies

The RCA also approved two new provisional liturgies, one for the ordination and installation of deacons and elders, and one for profession of faith. Its Commission on Theology reported that another year of study and revision will be required to process the responses to the papers "The Crucified One Is Lord" and "Moral Standards for Holders of Church Offices."

In other action, delegates voted to circulate a paper on the ethical issues of genetic engineering, urged the reduction of fossil fuel consumption, and approved a number of recommendations endorsing and promoting the Jubilee 2000/U.S.A. campaign, which calls for a one-time cancellation of the debt owed by the world's poorest countries.

The Reformed Church in America is the oldest Protestant denomination in North America, and is the "mother church" out of which the Christian Reformed Church in North America came.

Archaeologists may have found ancient Hebron, city of Abraham

HEBRON, Israel (EP) — Archaeologists believe they have uncovered the heart of the ancient city of Hebron, home of the biblical patriarch Abraham.

Excavations have discovered a nine-foot-thick city wall and a fortified tower. Both have been dated to the middle of the Bronze period, about 1700 B.C. Scholars think this is about the time when Abraham came to the city.

According to *News Report* from Jerusalem, the dig has also discovered two stone-walled rooms dating to the same period. Artifacts found in the rooms include a dagger handle, bronze axe heads, two scarabs and some silver jewelry.

"You usually find such things in tombs because people were buried with their belongings, but to find them here on the floor gives us a more precise date," explained Emanuel Eisenberg, who is in charge of the project.

Royal seals from the time of the kings of Israel were found in another layer, clearly identifying the site as biblical Hebron. The site is at the edge of Tel Rumeida, a large mound across which the city is believed to have stretched.

Dispute over site rights

The rights to the site are in dispute. Israel gave most of modern Hebron up to Palestinian control in 1996. The archaeological work was licensed shortly before the Israeli general election in May to do final research at the site before permanent homes are constructed for Israeli settlers. The Palestinians want all of Hebron, and believe the city's few hundred remaining Israelis should leave.

Both Palestinian and Israeli archaeologists believe the site should be protected for research, rather than developed for the controversial housing project.

However, a spokesperson for the settlers said the excavation has demonstrated Israel's right to the land. "We always knew this was the site of the ancient city; now these excavations have found positive proof of Jewish presence from the time of the patriarchs," said David Wilder. "In terms of Jewish roots and heritage, what more do you need?"

TV program to bring Christ back to Christmas

ORLANDO, Fla. (EP) — A "Millennial Tribute to Jesus" is being planned for Christmas Day this year. The worldwide telecast to an estimated 50 million people is being organized by Bill Bright of Campus Crusade For Christ and Paul Eshelman of the "JESUS" Film Project. A special edition of the evangelistic "JESUS" film will be aired, and world leaders and heads of state will be asked to tape 30-second messages about Jesus.

Russian Catholics struggle to recover their church buildings

Tatyana Titova

MOSCOW (Keston News Service) Cossacks in Anapa, 750 miles south of Moscow, forcibly attempted to prevent the construction of a Roman Catholic church in April by beating up one of the builders and putting him in hospital, says Miroslav Yanyak, the church's priest.

Too 'Western'

The Cossacks had accused the Catholics of being from the West and Fr. Yanyak of being an agent of the CIA: "When I explained to them that Greece – an Orthodox country – was also a member of NATO, this came as a complete surprise to them," says Yanyak. Eventually the Cossacks withdrew, and reached an agreement with the Catholics, but the situation is a graphic illustration of the tribulations faced by the Catholic Church in its attempts to reverse years of Russian state policy shaped by distrust of the Vatican.

Fr. Vadim Shaikevich, secretary to the archbishop who is apostolic administrator of the Latin-rite Catholics in European Russia, told Keston, "We do not own a single building; all our churches belong to the Russian Federation, including the land on which they stand.... Only a very few churches have been returned to us; or more precisely, the authorities have permitted us to use them."

Even the cathedral – the Bishop's seat – in Moscow is still being controlled by the Russian government, while Sunday masses take place in the street. Fr. Antoni Gei says, "We were recently promised that part of the church would be made available for worship and Sunday school classes, but were subsequently told that this would be impossible."

According to Gei, the government insists it "owns" only a 38 per cent share of the building, with the rest belonging to private shareholders. "The only way for us to get the building back is to prove in law that this privatization was illegal – the building was privatized a year after President Yeltsin issued a decree prohibiting the privatization of places of worship and architectural monuments.... We have already prepared documents for use in court."

Meanwhile, in the city of Vologda the Catholic church building has been privatized and now houses a restaurant. In Barnaul, the church currently houses a pharmacy.

Hinders revival

Lack of formal ownership hinders the revival of the Catholic Church in Russia: "The repairs which we are doing – and the church buildings, as a rule, are in a terrible state – are being done for the Russian Federation. When we ask the West for money to carry out church repairs, they ask us to whom the property belongs. When we answer: 'The Russian Federation,' prospective donors usually refuse to help us."

Fr. Shaikevich is not optimistic that this situation will be easy to change: "We need a law on restitution in order to restore the property situation of the Church to what it was before 1917," he told Keston. "However, the state does not want this since it would have to give back too much."

Presbyterians return to Iran

CYPRUS, Lebanon (EP) — The Presbyterian Church (USA) has revived its ministry among Iranians, both within and outside of Iran. Missionaries with the church were expelled from Iran after the 1979 Islamic revolution. Now, in co-operation with the Evangelical Church of Iran, training courses are being offered twice a year in Cyprus for church leaders, pastors, evangelists and Sunday school teachers. Up to 50 people travel from Iran to Cyprus to participate in these training events each year. The church has also assigned two missionaries to work with Iranian and Afghani refugees in Europe.

'Re-neighboring' by Christians renews blighted neighborhoods

ATLANTA (Religion Today) – Middle-class Christian families are relocating to impoverished neighborhoods where they are helping create wholesome places to live.

The strategy is known as "re-neighboring." It means that "strong Christian moral and entrepreneurial leaders" purposefully move into areas where crime and poverty are prevalent, asking God to drive out the evil and replace it with good, said Robert Lupton, who heads a Christian ministry that promotes and practices re-neighboring.

Once they move in, the new neighbors become active. They help reinvigorate or re-establish institutions such as churches and community groups that have been weakened or have fled as crime and poverty took over. The goal is to help neighborhoods "regain their health and vitality," said Lupton, president of FCS Urban Ministries, based in Atlanta. FCS has a staff of 60, most of whom live in the urban Atlanta neighborhoods of Summerhill, Grant Park and East Lake.

"I have never been more optimistic in my 28 years of ministry," Lupton told Religion Today. "This is an incredible time for cities. Twenty years ago all the pundits were saying the cities were dying. Now we are trying to accommodate all the new life."

War zone no longer

The Meadows, an Atlanta public housing complex known as "Little Vietnam" because of its deadly drug-related wars, is an example of re-neighboring. It has been transformed by a remarkable effort from Christians.

Gunfire at the Meadows is now silent. Buildings have been bulldozed or boarded up, and razor wire surrounds the perimeter. But across the street, on what used to be overgrown land where criminals used to hide drugs and stolen goods, a new Meadows has sprung up. Homes have been built, the swamp has been drained and replaced by a lake and golf course, and Meadow residents have moved into their new community, called The Villages of East Lake.

Impoverished families in East Lake live side-by-side with middle-income neighbors, recruited from area churches, who initiate block parties and house-warmings that build trust among diverse people. The newcomers build friendships in the community, helping their neighbors understand ways to live a productive life. They discuss their Christian faith, often leading others to become Christians.

'Marines,' pioneers

The transformation at East Lake occurred over several years. First, the FCS identified the abandoned Bobby Jones golf course as the "key latent asset" of the area, Lupton said. Tom Cousins, a Christian developer, bought the course, restored it to its original 1930s grandeur, and donated it to a foundation that was established to revitalize the community. FCS recruited 100 Fortune 500 chief executive officers to join the club at $250,000 each, supplying funds for other projects in the community.

The foundation bought property in the three highest-crime areas of the community and rehabilitated it or tore it down. They built 550 town homes and garden apartments in partnership with the federal Housing and Urban Development department.

Then the re-neighboring began. Working Christian families were recruited to move in as "strategic neighbors," Lupton said. The first to relocate to such a neighborhood are "the marines who land on the beaches, those that want to be on the front lines," he said. "The pioneers" are the next wave; they move if there are enough others to bring safety and attractive homes they can afford. At East Lake, Christian developers built houses and sold them at cost.

A full-time "community chaplain" lives in the neighborhood to encourage others to get involved in community life. He views everyone as a member of his "parish" regardless of their religious affiliation, gets to know them by name, and discovers their talents and interests. He might organize a committee to greet new residents or involve neighbors in producing a newsletter that contains a calendar of activities and human-interest stories. He does not start a church, but becomes available as a mediator, confessor and counsellor, holds Bible studies and encourages people to worship at a church of their choice.

The community chaplain idea is an adaptation of the old tradition of the "village parson" or "parish priest," Lupton said. The chaplain is recruited and assigned to a certain geographic area – which could be a high-rise apartment or a gated apartment community. The salary is paid out of the operational budget of a real estate developer or apartment owner "who understands the importance of the church" in the community, Lupton said. "Smart developers are aware that 'community' sells well these days. Yet beyond the clubhouse or fitness centre, few have figured out how to deliver it."

East Lake is "no mere real estate development," Lupton asserted. "It is a divine invasion by the Prince of Peace and 'on those living in the land of the shadow of death a Light has dawned.'"

The *rest* of the summer

Chapter & Verse

Al Wolters
• Mary S. Hulst Antonides

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. (Gen. 2:1-3)

"How's your summer going?" This is a standard question at this time of year, and the answers often have us hearing stories of cottages and camping and cookouts. Many people use this time to travel, see friends, enjoy family reunions, and indulge in quiet afternoons in a hammock with a good book and a glass of iced tea.

Summer is an idyllic time. We watch less television, putter around outside, tend our gardens, eat more vegetables, pick more fruit. Kids can play outside "until the street lights come on," and can while away their days contemplating pollywogs or pussy willows.

Even though I am in year four of my ministry and should know better, I still expect summer to be a quieter time. I still expect to have the type of peaceful freedom which marked my summers for my first 25 years. I remember fondly handing in the last exam, breathing a sigh of relief, and looking forward to a summer full of non-academic, restful, renewing activities. But old habits die hard. Years of the academic schedule are emblazoned upon my psyche, and as the weather warms I find myself waiting for things to slow down!

'Whatever'

Turning the calendar to the summer months doesn't slow things down much in a church. Yes. Sunday school doesn't meet and the choir doesn't sing, but there are couples to counsel and wed, sermons to write and preach, sacraments to administer, and, of course, fall programs to prepare and staff.

When I meet with our middle school or even high school students on Sunday evenings and we talk about our summers, I can feel myself turning wistful: "So what are you doing this summer?"

"Oh, I don't know. I go to the library, I'll camp for a week with my family, I ride my bike, play on the computer. You know – whatever."

"You know – whatever." I doubt I'm the only adult who hears such things and a.) feels old; and b.) wants her childhood summers back!

I was speaking recently with a parishioner who is married to a teacher who is off in the summer. The parishioner said with longing, "I think everyone should have a time during which their work is wrapped up, when they can have a true break and not think about what's piling up for them back at the office, and can return to work refreshed and ready for a new start."

This is wishful thinking, but it's also biblical. Our almighty God who created everything out of nothing also created *sabbath*. He modeled rest. He set apart time for rest and commanded us (no suggestion, an actual commandment!) to do the same.

What better time than the summer to devote ourselves anew to imitating our restful God?

This summer, devote yourself to rest:

* Leave the office early and take a long walk.
* Catch a frog.
* Put a blade of grass between your hands and try to make it whistle.
* Lie down in the grass and watch the clouds.
* Let the answering machine get it.
* Read a classic.
* Go to the farmer's market.
* Ride your bike.
* Swim in a lake.
* Sleep in.
* Get up early, sit on the porch/patio/deck and have a second cup of coffee as you listen to the birds.
* Watch the sun set.
* Do any number of things you haven't done in a long time.

This summer, discover rest.

Mary Hulst Antonides is pastor of the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

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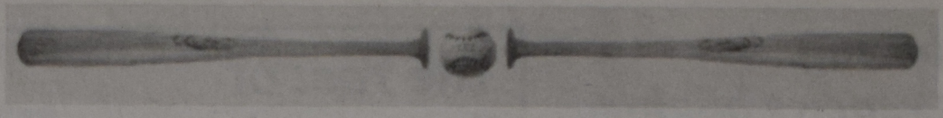


Scott D. Pomfret

There's a dizzying sun in centrefield. Ben pulls down his cap, smacks his glove, looks up, waits for the pitch.

Crack!

His heart jumps. His legs work before he knows it. He sprints toward right field. Ben thinks about his teammate playing in right: *Get there first, Bobby, get there first!* The last thing Ben could deal with right now was a drop.

However, Bobby can't run for beans, Ben knows that. In fact, the whole team calls him Molasses – maybe not such a Christian thing to do, he suddenly thinks. Bobby's in right field because Coach needs to play him two innings – league rules – and can't hide him anywhere else. No, catching this monster fly has to be Ben's job.

But Ben's legs are lead. His mind's not on the game. He wants to give up. Give up on the fly ball. Give up on life. Give up especially on Patty Finn, who has turned him down as a date to the dance.

What Ben should do, *would* do – if he had any heart at all – is get there, get a glove on the fly, and then drop it on purpose.

Ben angles deeper. He wonders why Patty turned him down. Why *really*. It would be one thing if someone else had already asked Patty. But Ben has checked it out, he's done research, did all but call up her mom. Maybe Patty will never like him. Or maybe (Ben brightened at the thought), maybe she's just playing hard to get. Maybe she really likes him and wants him to ask again. Maybe that's it. Ben falters a step. For a second he loses sight of the ball. How would anyone know? How does a boy ever know what a girl thinks?

The wind rushes by, and suddenly Ben is conscious of his ears sticking out. *It's the ears*, he thinks, crushed. *It's my stupid ears!* Then he hears his mom's familiar voice: "Those are the ears that God gave you, Ben; they look perfectly good to me."

But of course they look good to her, she's his mom. Things about you always look good to your mom. Whether he catches this fly ball to right or not, his mom will think he's doing OK. But it is Patty Finn's opinion, not his mom's that he cares about just now; and he hopes his mom will forgive him for thinking it.

Out of the corner of his eye, Ben sees a flash of Molasses. "Mine!"

Ben screams, "MineMineMine Mine!" (The way Coach taught, once is NOT enough!) But Ben hardly needs Coach to tell him to keep out of Molasses' way. It's a survival issue. Molasses is a big boy. Ben can just imagine getting tangled in Molasses's legs, and down they'd go, both looking stupid. And Coach would ask, giving each a pathetic and withering look, "You have a nice roll in the hay, girls?"

Patty Finn, Patty Finn. Maybe Ben should leave well enough alone, he just doesn't know. But what is it his Sunday school teacher used to tell him? If you can't make up your mind, leave it to the Spirit to help you decide. *Ruach*, the teacher used to say, is Hebrew word for spirit. It means "rushing wind."

Ben is almost caught up to the ball now, at least it seems that way. And so he gives an extra push. With any luck at all, maybe he'll get the ball on a bounce, hold the guy to a double or a triple. Two RBIs will tie the score, but that's better than a homer.

Now Ben's Dad, he'd never settle for a double or a triple. He'd never get refused a dance by some girl. Same as Ben's Dad would have had enough money to treat the "coeds" in his high school right, because – as his Dad never fails to remind Ben – he'd been up before dawn delivering newspapers for his keep. And he'd still made the provincial all-star team; and top grades. And it just doesn't help for Ben to explain: "Dad, they don't even have paper routes for kids any more, and they definitely don't call girls co-eds. Not anymore."

The ball's coming down, smaller and faster. *Spirit!* he reminds himself. *Surrender to the Spirit.*

Surrender to the Spirit? While trying to catch a ball? Stop thinking so much. Ben has forgotten where the runners are, how many outs there are, and who the cut off man is. The closer the ball gets, the more Ben's brain turns to mush.

You're beginning to sound like you-know-who, Ben thinks. Ben's Dad is always telling him, "You never do anything right, never follow through." And his Dad tells others: "Benny's got the wheels, he's got the skills, he just thinks too much. Yeah, Ben could be a superstar if he'd stop thinking so much!".

What Ben should do, *would* do – if he had any heart at all – is get there, get a glove on the fly, and then drop it on purpose. *I could make it obvious, embarrass Dad*, he thinks. *And then quit the team, so Dad can run to tell all his friends about* that. *And forget Patty Finn, I don't need her, either.*

CARY WOLINSKY, STOCK, BOSTON

Crack!

Ben stumbles, catching a spike in uneven ground. No, no, no!

It doesn't seem like he's the one doing the thinking, it's like a guiding hand that's going to give him that last little nudge he needs to make it under the fly ball.

No, if Ben's going to surrender, if he's going to give up to anything, he's going to do it the right way. He feels light and fast. He can tell the difference between deciding everything himself, alone, and opening to something bigger.

The ball is close now, big as a moon, and – blam! – it hits so hard Ben's heart jumps. The force of the ball spins him around, just into the right position to throw. Ben thanks the ball, grips it and for a split second feels the brushed leather, knot laces, and a bruise where the bat hit. It's all so tangible.

Are you supposed to think that God might be in a baseball? Are you allowed to think it's some kind of sign?

Ben rears back, takes that short step (Coach always says, "Just 'cause you're throwing far doesn't mean you have to step far. What, you gonna walk it there?") and hurls.

Ben stretches out, balances, hop, hop, everything faster now, parents in the stands cheering, hop, stretch, shoulder burning. The guy who was on second struggles to get back, didn't tag. Ben yells, "Oh, don't cut that throw off, don't cut it off.." His voice surprises him, it doesn't break.

Zip!

The cutoff guy lets the ball zing over his head. The shortstop reaches, catches, tags second. Out? Doubleplay!

Ben smells the grass and the mud, and Molasses, finally in the same postal code, huffing and puffing and stinking of Marshmallows. Molasses laughs, pounds him on the back, shouts, "You the man, Benny-boy?" Ben feels bad for making fun of him.

Take that, Patty Finn! Not many people get a chance to go to the dance with a baseball hero! Ben thinks. *Take that, Coach! Take that, Dad! Dad?*

Take, he thinks more penitently, *take a little gift from Above.* He looks up, says a short, silent prayer: You *the man, God?*

Then he says "Sorry, Bobby," but Molasses doesn't know what he's talking about. No matter: Ben flips up his cap, struts toward the infield. He thinks: *Yeah, it's all right to take God where you find him, even on a baseball field.*

Scott Pomfret is a freelance writer who lives in Concord, New Hampshire.

Patriotism

Why I decline to vote

Walfried E. Goossen

When Peter Trueman was still anchor man on Global TV news, I corresponded with him occasionally. In one letter, before the last federal election, I mentioned, "I do not vote because I do not feel obligated to support one of three bad choices." I was astonished when he replied, "That's the same reason I don't vote."

Since then, I haven't changed my view but I have changed my tactics. Staying home on voting day won't improve our politics. We need an effective protest. There's a way to do that, which I'll return to in a minute.

Many people say it doesn't matter who you vote for as long you vote. That has degenerated from its original meaning of "find a candidate you can support" to "put an X beside any name." Some voters put an X beside candidates they know nothing about. Many voters have not bothered to follow the issues or stay informed. Yet they think they have done their civic duty. That is not responsible citizenship. It is a shameful sabotage of the democratic system.

Add to this the sleight-of-hand tactics of politicians who buy our votes by promising us all we demand (and then forget their commitments until the next election) and you have political and ethical corruption.

Single-issue interests

Our habit of voting as interest groups is equally destructive, even when the "interest" is a good one. Unions look after their own, the wealthy have their own agenda, the middle class has theirs. And gun toters cry foul unless 12-year-olds are licenced to kill animals. Gays demand rights to be "married" and adopt children. Abortionists want choice (the hallowed right to take human life), while Pro-life advocates reject a candidate on all grounds but one.

Too many groups are mainly concerned with a single self-centred issue. Our elected "leaders" cave in to those who attract the most media attention from our media. This is a system sensible voters should support?

Perhaps most insidious is the neutralizing of conflict-ridden issues by collusion among the major political parties (whether deliberate or not) to agree on certain issues, thus defusing volatile issues regardless of voters' concerns. For example, the three long-standing parties now support Sunday shopping and gambling, and the recent Court decision regarding same-sex "marriages." There are no more choices for voters in those areas, leaving only safer issues on the election agenda, such as health care and education which are not as personal or divisive as human rights issues, although they generate a lot of heat.

Instead, parliamentarians can throw meaningless numbers at us to which we cannot relate because they are never accurate. The pre-election party leaders debate was little more than a smoke screen of fictitious numbers and mindless, repeated slogans.

Finally, politicians refuse to challenge the Supreme Court's unwarranted power and status as unassailable legal arbiter and author of social policies. Our governments can overturn Supreme Court decisions, but rarely risk taking a stand by doing so, thus shirking their responsibilities.

All-powerful court

More and more social issues have become the subject of Supreme Court decisions, and Christians (and many other Canadians) often disagree with the Court. Yet not a single judge is elected. The judges have no effective accountability to the citizens of Canada.

As a result, our elections often focus on image – on which party leader takes the best picture, has the most agreeable style; and, from my point of view, on who can prevaricate the best. They are all groomed by communications experts and "image consultants," aided by make-up and fashion gurus. Behind all this is a corrupting lust for power and a "blue book" or "red book," an instructional monograph on how to succeed at any cost.

In many ways, our democracy suffers from the same flaws as the dictatorships described by Niccolo Machiavelli in his classic guide to "ruling," *The Prince* (1513). Machiavelli described how a ruler should appear to be trustworthy, humane, religious and honest, and even to be so; but also to always be ready to be the opposite if necessary.

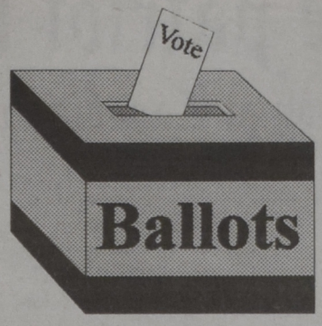
He also wrote: "Since they [human beings] are wicked and will not keep faith with you, you are not bound to keep faith with them." Published 486 years ago, this book and a host of variations on its methodology and ethical justifications for governmental cruelty and dishonesty still represent the way politics is done. As British writer and critic John Addington Symonds points out, *The Prince* is "the foundation of modern political science."

The quest is for power, and then to hold onto it by whatever means are deemed necessary. We can only counter this by rediscovering our vision of freedom, honor and reverence for the Creator of all things. We need moral and spiritual healing.

Until that happens, is there anything a beleaguered citizen can do to at least mitigate this oppression or to voice a protest against it? There is.

It is of no small significance that Ontario, for instance, allows and counts "declined" ballots. A declined ballot is a ballot that you hand back to the deputy returning officer right after he or she hands it to you, saying, "I decline this ballot." The Election Act says the deputy returning officer must mark the ballot declined and set it aside. The number of declined ballots is counted and recorded. This is the only effective protest. Scrawling across the ballot "None of the above" or otherwise defacing the ballot simply results in your ballot being counted as rejected or spoiled, as if you marked it incorrectly.

Taking a ballot to the polling booth and then returning it without marking an X beside any name simply results in the ballot being counted as blank. To decline it, the ballot must be declined as soon as you get it.



Declining a ballot is also very different from not voting, which is what I've done in the past. When about a third of Ontario voters don't go to the polls, there is no way to tell if voters stay home out of laziness, difficulties getting out, or out of principled opposition to the choices. Going to the polling place to decline a ballot makes it clear where you stand.

Some people claim that declined ballots are just a waste and are detrimental to the voting process. I disagree. When I "decline" my ballot I will be saying: "I decline to vote for one of several bad choices!" It is really the only way to say, in effect, "None of the above."

It is a procedure that isn't used much or well known. In the area covered by *The Spectator* (Hamilton-Wentworth, Halton, Haldimand-Norfolk, Niagara and Brant), only 932 ballots were declined in 1995 out of almost 620,000 voters who went to the polls in those areas. In part, that may reflect lack of knowledge of the possibility.

If there were enough declined ballots, political parties would take note of them and would have to ask themselves: what can we do to win people's confidence? Even relatively small numbers of declined ballots can represent more than the margin of victory in close races, which should get the attention of at least those who narrowly lose.

An effective protest

Unlike voting for small alternative parties, a declined ballot expresses disappointment or anger with the entire system. It is a "vote" demanding better government and support for those who will give it. It is a responsible vote, an honest vote, an ethically and politically mature vote. Unfortunately, most people simply vote for a candidate or party whether they agree in principle or not for what that candidate/party stand for. And then they gripe about the government they elected.

Good government is the big issue in our elections. But most voters ask mainly: "What's in it for me?" For the most part, we have the government we deserve. I believe I deserve better. That's why, for now, I decline to vote for any of them.

Walfried E. Goossen is a freelance writer in Dundas, Ont.

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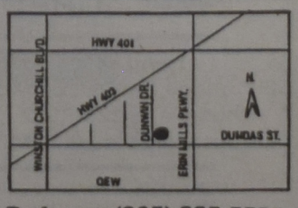

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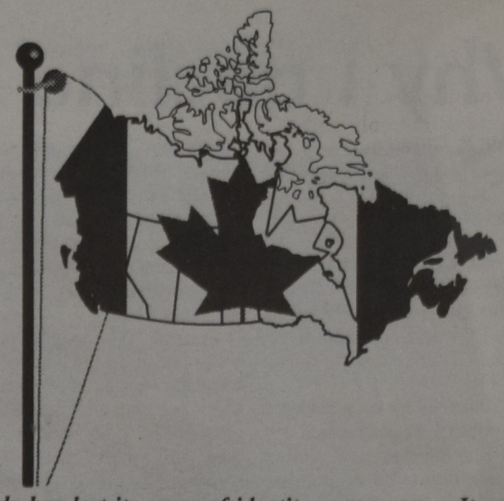
Patriotism

'True patriot love':

Another look at Canadian patriotism



Canada has lost its sense of identity, many argue. Its citizens need to develop a more muscular and potent nationalism.

John Hiemstra

"America, right or wrong, we're on your side!" chanted a background crowd in a scene during CNN's now legendary live coverage of the Gulf War. That jingoistic patriotism sent shivers down the backs of many mild-mannered Canadians watching from north of the 49th parallel.

No matter our nationality, we ought to shiver at such a thing. In our "friendly neighbor to the south," as my sixth-grade textbook called the United States, love of country has often been an "ism." When that happens it converts the limits and responsibilities of government into trivial afterthoughts.

Patriotism can over-inflate love of country so that it blocks out other normative considerations. Ultimately, excessive patriotism disengages government from the greatest command – to love God above all and our (international) neighbors as ourselves.

Excessive patriotism disengages government from the greatest command – to love God above all and our (international) neighbors as ourselves.

Canadians have been reconsidering patriotism and identity in the wake of Quebec's latest independence vote. Canada has lost its sense of identity, many argue. Its citizens need to develop a more muscular and potent nationalism. We hear our neighbors calling for a new powerful glue to hold Canadians together across our increasingly deep divisions of region, language, religion, ethnicity and income.

Christian options

Canadian Christians have reacted to this call for identity and nationalism in various conflicting ways. Whom should we follow?

Should we join those Christians who reject this debate as a false dilemma? After all, they say, the United Nations has frequently named Canada the best country to live in. We are rich and prosperous competitors in the global marketplace; so why worry about patriotism and identity?

Perhaps Canadians might adopt a mild form of patriotism? What's wrong with displaying one of Sheila Copps's Canadian flags inside the church alongside the cross? God has blessed Canada with peace, democracy and freedom of worship; let's celebrate this.

Or maybe Christians ought to borrow the standard nationalist definition of Canada? Canada is a unique country and needs to be protected from Americanism and globalism, some say. After all, they correctly note, Canada is unlike the United States, we treasure our universal medicare system, and our identity is intricately linked to the vast expanse of "our home and native land."

We could join Christians who, upset with the moral decline of Canada, call us to return to Canada's Christian heritage.

Today, they say, we have fallen so far that Svend Robinson MP can table a petition in Parliament asking for the removal from the Constitution of the phrase that Canada is based on "the supremacy of God." This proves, they continue, that we need to return to Canada's golden age when we were "God's dominion." This position is correct in that the Europeans who initially constructed the Canadian state did adhere to some Christian values. But there is also much national sin and injustice in Canada's historical record.

Another option is that we give up searching for a Canadian identity and heed the "summons to the lifeboats" from Christians who claim Canada is a sinking ship, beyond hope, and ripe for judgment. Love of country, preserving national identity or recovering a Christian heritage are all absurd in this perverse and wicked society.

All of these positions contain a grain of truth, as well as distortions. So how can we properly and fittingly love our country when it offers us both perversion and freedom, is unique but also eerily similar to the United States, treats everyone equitably although still allowing abortion, and denies biblical influences in our history while also retaining the "supremacy of God" in the constitution? How can we who are Canadian find our Christian bearings in these mixed and confusing times? What is healthy love of country?

Based on my experience working on policy research and advocacy with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and Citizens for Public Justice as well as my teaching at The King's University College, I propose the following guidelines for discerning what is "true patriot love" – as our national anthem suggests. These guidelines help me reflect on Christian citizenship and I hope they help you do so in our rapidly changing times. (These could be guidelines for any Christian, regardless of which country they live in, but we'll focus on Canada.)

Five guidelines for 'true patriot love'

*** Christians should avoid the extremes of political triumphalism and quietism.** Both religious and secular versions of these approaches produce a patriotism that twists creaturely life. Utopian approaches deny the Bible's warnings that government can never usher in the Kingdom of God on earth. But Christians who act like exiles in creation can also produce situations of

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political oppression. When Christians avoid the holy calling to do justice, someone else steps into the breach and might shape the political community without respect for God's norms. Pilgrim wanderers too easily ignore God's faithful provision of government to humanity (Romans 13).

*** God's norms for political life are guidelines not goals**. The biblical call to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:6) is not a set of goals for a construction project that we are commissioned to build. Rather, God's norms are guidelines for our daily walk. Christians need to learn to do political work expectantly, with open hands, waiting for God's blessings in our public lives.

*** Love real Canadians more than you love your abstract ideal of a perfect Canada**. Indeed, our country falls far short of God's will on many issues ranging from sexual life to economic equity, environmental stewardship to criminal justice. But we need to learn to politically love flesh-and-blood people in their day-to-day struggles more than we love our abstract images of past or coming ideal communities. Love embraces people and encourages them to return to faithful living.

*** Canadian 'identity' is not an essence to be analyzed in national life, but our concrete answer to God's call**. Much of our current preoccupation with Canadian identity is misguided. Our national identity is determined by the way we, as a particular group of people with diverse characteristics and unique history, answer God's call to be human within the territory of Canada. Answering God's multidimensional callings provides us with an identity! Lament the sin and praise the faithfulness of concrete Canadians in this political community.

*** God enjoins us to love through concrete acts of service** (1John 3:16-17). Christians may not retreat to the sidelines of politics but must play the political game by developing wise and effective policies for our neighbor's good. This helps grow healthy political community. Pastors and church leaders need to directly challenge Christians to enter political office on all levels.

*** Everything involves politics, but politics is not everything**. The political community we are called to love has limited responsibilities. It is easier to love, and also criticize, our country when we realize that it is simply one of many overlapping communities called to obey Christ. Government is not primarily responsible for all of your (mis)behavior in school, work, church, or family. You must answer to God directly.

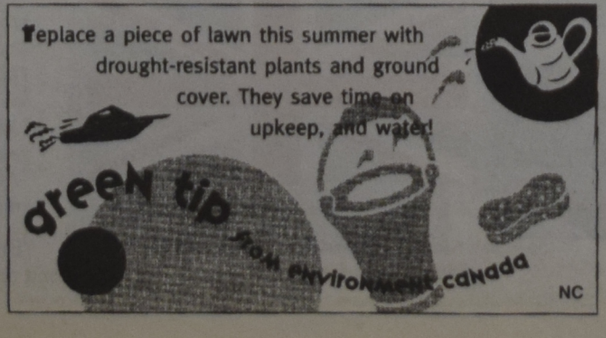
Government does have a real and significant role in legally integrating society. It must ensure that people, institutions and associations have access to the resources they need to fulfil their God-given callings. We need to learn not to blame the government for all ills nor ask it to solve them all. But government must fulfil its task well or society suffers – especially the weak and marginalized. Christians therefore have a duty to engage continually in biblical and empirical reflection on the nature and extent of political authority and justice.

*** Justice is one of the ways we are to love our neighbors**, as the late Bernard Zylstra (who taught political theory at Toronto's Institute for Christian Studies) once said. "True patriot love" must, therefore, ultimately manifest itself in human actions that encourage justice to roll down like a mighty river (Amos 5:24). In God's grace, only the powerful glue of justice can hold Canadians together across our deep divisions.

GRACE DEUTSCH & A.VANDERA.SWAN

Our identity is intricately linked to the vast expanse of 'our home and native land.'

John Hiemstra is associate professor of political studies at The King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta.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Patriotism

National anthems: Of prayer, pride and power

Argentina

France

The United States

Ghana

Harry der Nederlanden

National anthems are supposed to arouse feelings of pride and loyalty, like the smell of pizza arouses the appetite. We expect anthems to be bold, aggressive, proud songs, songs that send shivers up between our shoulder blades to the crown of our heads, songs that set us marching along with phalanxes of patriots recruited across the ages.

The refrain of "O Canada," for example, proclaims its citizens readiness to stand on guard for their nation. This sounds a militant note, but I guess you can also be vigilant on behalf of the freedom of your country by maintaining its democratic institutions and its spirit. The American national anthem conjures up a picture of a flag flying in the middle of a battlefield at dawn.

And the French Marseillaise is a call to arms:

To arms, to arms, ye brave!
Th'avenging sword unsheathe!
March on, march on, all hearts resolved
On liberty or death.

The words and the melody conspire to pump the spirit of self-sacrifice into French blood so that the French citizen is ready to devote all to noble ideals and to the good of the fatherland (or motherland).

The Germans used to speak of Blut und Boden [blood and soil]. One of the most extreme anthems in this respect is Mexico's, which begins:

Mexicans, at the cry of battle
lend your sword and bridle;
make the earth tremble at its core
with the cannons' mighty roar.

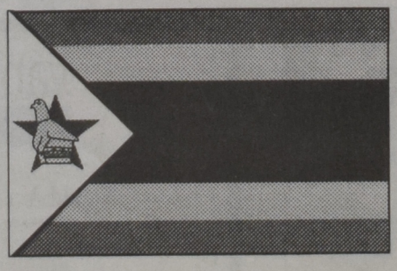
The second verse calls Mexicans to "War, war!" three times, observing: "The patriotic banners saturate in waves of blood."

When I began sampling national anthems from several different sites on the Internet, I really expected most of them to have this militant tone combined with avowals of self-sacrifice. To my surprise, I discovered that many anthems do not.

A number of older anthems are really hymns asking God to protect and sustain the monarch: "God Save the Queen!" sing the British (the English, Welsh, Irish, Scots – though each of these have individual anthems as well). I sang "God Save the Queen" too, in grade school. It used to make me wonder why all of us up there in northern Alberta were so concerned about the well-being of a rich lady living in a castle in far-off England.

My education did little to instill in me the political theology that saw the peace and welfare of the entire body politic depend on its head, the monarch. To pray for blessings on the Queen was, of course, a figure of speech: we were really asking for God to rule us through her.

The Wilhelmus, the national anthem of the Netherlands, also involves an identification with a monarch, with a specific one – William of Nassau, the prince who led the nation in its war of liberation from Spain. It has the distinction of being the oldest and probably also the longest of the anthems. The Internet gives us only two verses, but there are a 13 more, for the first letter of each verse spells out his name: Willem van Nassau.



Zimbabwe

The content and tone of a national anthem depends largely on when it was written and adopted. The militancy of many of them reflect the fact that a great many nations were born in war and that they do owe their existence to those willing to sacrifice themselves in its defense. The militancy of the *Marsellaise*, for example, is directed more against tyranny in the name of liberty than it is against external aggressors. This reminds us that it was written in 1792, shortly after the French Revolution.

The national anthem of Argentina, however, similarly calls on the ideal of liberty:

Liberty, Liberty, Liberty,
hear the sound of broken chains....

The anthems of a couple of African countries that achieved their independence in our century, Zimbabwe and Ghana, also laud liberty and freedom, but they speak far less of war and bloodshed. Zimbabwe's anthem does mention "our heros' sacrifice," but most of the song is a prayer: "And may the Almighty protect and bless our land." Here is the second verse:

O lovely Zimbabwe, so wondrously adorned
With mountains, and rivers cascading, flowing free;
May rain abound, and fertile fields;
May we be fed, our labor blessed;
And may the Almighty protect and bless our land.

United Kingdom

Ghanians also cherish liberty, but they sing of other virtues as well:

God bless our homeland Ghana,
And make our nation great and strong,
Bold to defend forever
The cause of Freedom and of Right.
Fill our hearts with true humility
Make us cherish fearless honesty,
And help us to resist oppressors' rule
With all our will and might evermore.

It may be true that there is a deep relationship between blood and liberty, but some anthems seem to relish wading ankle deep in blood, and it doesn't seem to matter whether it is someone else's or their own. I confess that I prefer songs that slight war and monarchs and that sing instead about the beauty of the country itself. Brazilians, for example, wax wildly eloquent about their country:

Brazil, a dream sublime, vivid ray of love and hope to earth descends,
Where in your clear, pure, beauteous skies
The image of the Southern Cross shines forth.

Laid out eternally in the splendor of nature,
In the sound of the sea and the light of heaven;
May you shine, O Brazil, flower of America,
Illumined by the sun of the New World!

More flowers put forth in thy fair, smiling fields
Than in the most gorgeously reputed lands;
"More life is to be found in the groves,"
"More love in our lives" in thy embrace.

"Beautiful is our homeland," begins one anthem, one that hardly contains a

Croatia

single martial note. Here are the second and fourth stanzas:

You are our only glory,
You are our only treasure,
Yes, we love your plains and valleys,
Yes, we love your hills and mountains.

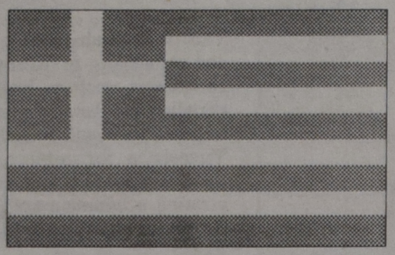
When his fields are kissed by sunshine,
When his oaks are whipped by wild winds,
When his dear ones go to heaven,
Still his heart beats for Croatia!

Yes, it's the national anthem of Croatia. This reminds us that the same themes that unite people in an emotional pledge of commitment to high ideals also unite them in bloody wars against others. Who would deny that commitment to one's people, love of one's homeland, and devotion to liberty and justice make the world a richer place? They inspire songs that stir us deeply. It reminds us that again and again men and women turn the very gifts that enrich life into swords that cut it asunder.

Some newer anthems give evidence of the dangers packed in the very emotions and virtues that they traditionally call up, and they seek to contain them by enclosing them in a prayer for peace. The national anthem of New Zealand is a model in this respect.

God of nations at thy feet,
In the bonds of love we meet;
Hear our voices, we entreat:
God defend our free land.
Guard Pacific's triple star
From the shafts of strife and war;
Make her praises heard afar:
God defend New Zealand.

Men of ev'ry creed and race
Gather here before thy face
Asking Thee to bless this place:
God defend our free land.
From dissension, envy, hate



Greece

And corruption guard our state.
Make our country good and great:
God defend New Zealand.

Peace, not war, shall be our boast;
But should foe assail our coast,
Make us then a mighty host:
God defend our free land.
Lord of battles, in they might
Put our enemies to flight.
Let our cause be just and right:
God defend New Zealand.

Let our hope for Thee increase,
May Thy blessing never cease;
Give us plenty, give us peace:
God defend our free land.
From dishonor and from shame
Guard our country's spotless name;
Crown her with immortal fame:
God defend New Zealand.

May our mountains ever be
Freedom's ramparts on the sea;
Make us faithful unto Thee:
God defend our free land.
Guide her in the nation's van,
Preaching love and truth to man;
Working out Thy glorious plan:
God defend New Zealand.

I include the text of Switzerland's national anthem as one of the most poetic.

When the morning skies grow red
and over us their radiance shed,
Thou, O Lord, appeareth in their light.

South Africa

Switzerland

When the Alps glow bright with splendor,
pray to God, to him surrender:
for you feel and understand
that He dwelleth in this land.

In the sunset Thou art nigh,
and beyond the starry sky,
Thou, O loving Father, ever near.
When to Heaven we are departing,
joy and bliss Thou'lt be imparting;
for we feel and understand
that Thou dwellest in this land.

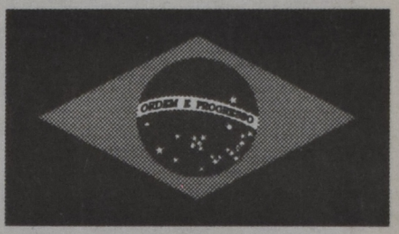
When dark clouds enshroud the hills
and gray mist the valley fills.
yet Thou art not hidden from thy sons.
Pierce the gloom in which we cower
with Thy sunshine's cleansing power;
then we'll feel and understand
that God dwelleth in this land.

Here is the new national anthem of South Africa. Notice that it is very unlike any traditional song; it is a prayer from beginning to end.

Lord, bless Africa,
May her spirit rise high up;
Hear thou our prayers.
Lord, bless us.
Lord, bless Africa,
May her spirit rise high up;
Hear thou our prayers,
Lord, bless us, Your family.

Chorus:

New Zealand



Brazil

Descend, O Spirit,
Descend, O Holy Spirit,
Lord bless us,
Your family.

Compare this prayerful hymn to the anthem of Greece, the nation often said to be the cradle of Western ideals of liberty.

We knew thee of old,
Oh, divinely restored,
By the lights of thine eyes
And the light of thy Sword.

From the graves of our slain
Shall thy valor prevail,
As we greet thee again –
Hail, Liberty! Hail!

Long time didst thou dwell
Mid the peoples that mourn,
Awaiting some voice
That should bid thee return.

Ah, slow broke that day,
And no man dared call,
For the shadow of tyranny
Lay over all:

And we saw thee sad-eyed,
The tears on thy cheeks,
While thy raiment was dyed
In the blood of the Greeks.

Yet behold now thy sons
With impetuous breath,
Go forth to the fight
Seeking Freedom or Death.

From the graves of our slain
Shall thy valor prevail,
As we greet thee again –
Hail, Liberty! Hail!

Harry der Nederlanden has done graduate studies at the State University of New York, and lives in St. Catharines, Ont.

Patriotism

A deep need to belong:
Patriotism pervades the human spirit

Judy Cook

One memory that defines patriotism for me occurred when I was a pre-schooler in the Hague. I wore a beautiful orange *strik* in my hair, and was allowed to watch a parade *op Koninginnedag* (the celebration of the Queen's birthday). The color orange was also festively displayed in sashes, flowers and banners. Everyone was cheerful and happy, and so was I.

At the tenth anniversary of the end of World War II in May 1955, the celebration included a so-called "folk parade." All adults and teens of the Hague were invited to help depict the history of the Netherlands. Everyone was outfitted with appropriate costumes of farmers, craftspeople, soldiers, etc., as well as some noblemen and -women depicting important historical personages. At the very end of the parade were Dutch boys dressed in German uniforms, walking the goose step of Nazi Germany, and giving the stiff-armed "Sieg heil!" salute.

NBT. RAMADORAI

Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands with her husband, Prince Claus.

If we shun or relegate to a lesser status those who are not like us, we create an Us versus Them mentality.

The parade was exciting to me as an 11-year-old. We had a ringside seat at our third storey house windows, since the parade route included our street. My older brothers were in the parade somewhere. The dates of important historic events memorized in grade school began to come alive as those events appeared to scroll past me, and I felt proud of my country.

But the goose-stepping Dutch boys in back, looking like the hated Nazis, had to be removed from the parade for their own safety. People pelted them with bruised fruit and abusive words. I remember being amazed that some people seemed to have forgotten the boys were Dutch and were just pretending.

A sense of ownership

I also felt patriotic, some years later, when Canada went through the process of becoming an independent nation in the 1960s. I felt proud of my adopted country on its first Canada Day on July 1. I felt indignant when, in a 1993 World Series game played in the U.S., the Canadian flag was inadvertently carried in upside-down by the American honor guard.

But during our family's 12-year stay in the U.S. from 1970 to 1982 I felt patriotic to that country during the primaries when Jimmy Carter was running for President in 1976. For the first time as a Canadian immigrant to the U.S. I wished I were a citizen so that I could have voted for him. When he was decisively defeated for a second term I felt regret and mourned his defeat as a loss for "my country," i.e., the country in which I had begun to put down new roots. By 1982 I had lived approximately 12 years in each of three countries: the Netherlands, Canada, and the U.S. My feelings of pride and belonging were experienced in those three countries in equal measure, as well. Part of who I am inevitably is to be a patriot.

To be patriotic is not wrong or bad. We are all created to be rooted somewhere in community with others. Ideally, a sense of identity and belonging is nurtured first of all in a loving family, but the neighborhood, city, province and, eventually, the country we live and grow up in all play a part in how we see and know ourselves in relation to the rest of the world and to God.

In the same way we develop a love for mother and father, siblings or grandparents, we venture out into our surroundings from where we live. We learn to love the tree in our backyard, the mini-mart on the corner of our street, and eventually also the country in which we live. Or, if we live in very poor or oppressed circumstances, we might learn to love the imagined country – like America, or heaven.

Think of the African-American spiritual "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"– "comin' for to carry me home." To be able to identify with and feel a love for one's country creates a sense of ownership, and therefore also a sense of responsibility for what occurs in one's country. In short, patriotism helps us be good citizens.

When 'entitlement' erupts

But what happens when love for one's country and identification with the nation or province or city in which we live begins to exclude anyone who does not "fit" with our ideal of ourselves and those we admire? For instance, if we identify only with other (French-speaking) Quebeckers or other Frisians, and shun or relegate to a lesser status those who are not like us, we create an Us versus Them mentality. We then see ourselves as "in" and others as "out." We belong, others are tolerated, or pitied. Or, at the end of the in-out continuum, whoever doesn't belong is hated and despised.

When strong patriotism towards one's own group is combined with hatred for those outside the group a sense of entitlement sets in. Particularly in countries where oppression by larger or more powerful neighbors has been the norm, and where poverty reigns, groups act out their hatred, frustration and feelings of helplessness on their closest neighbors.

Think of Protestant and Catholic in Northern Ireland. Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda, and now Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo. Past conquerors, such as English imperialists and Russian communists imposed their will in Ireland and Yugoslavia, for instance, forcing an uneasy peace among people by creating a commonwealth or republic imposed from outside one's roots.

No wonder, as imperialism has waned and communism faltered, that groups within those countries are fighting to determine who and what they are, who is in and who is out.

The recent ethnic cleansing perpetrated in areas like Rwanda and the Balkans in the early '90s is not new group behavior, however. In Bible times when one country sought to enlarge its territory and conquer a neighboring people or tribe, its inhabitants were slaughtered, its cities burned and only its livestock and young female virgins kept as plunder.

Even God commanded the Israelites to wipe out the pagan nations from the promised land when they took possession, instructing them to "drive out all the inhabitants" after they had crossed the Jordan River by Jericho (Numbers 33:51, NIV).

To us this sounds pretty barbaric, doesn't it. Today we would be appalled at the conquering and slaughtering action done by the Israelites as they established themselves as a nation, driving out and killing the present inhabitants.

But God's move to accomplish his plan of salvation through the history of the world has not included going against the cultural norms in a particular period of history – except perhaps in the beginning, at the destruction of the inhabitants of the then world by a flood, and at the tower of Babel through the confusion of languages.

During the period of history when Israel established itself, "ethnic cleansing" was the norm, and the surrounding people were certainly not surprised at Israel's conquering spirit – any of them would have done the same given the opportunity, resources, strength and a corresponding desire to enlarge their territory. Some of the ancient tribal wars described in the book of Numbers seem to have their echo in our 20th century world as well.

In his book *Blood and Belonging*, Michael Ignatieff describes how Yugoslavia under Josip Broz Tito's Communist rule established an imposed unity for a time. When Communism collapsed, however, unity quickly disintegrated and the old tribal fear of being conquered re-established itself. Combine fear with denial of one's own responsibility, and centuries' old conflicts will continue to exist and proliferate.

Vicious torture and killing will continue to be perpetrated by ordinary citizens upon each other fuelled by fear, hatred, and a sense of being in the right. "No one," says Ignatieff, "is responsible for anything but the other side. In the moral universe of pure nationalist delusion, all action is compelled by tragic necessity. Towns must be shot in order to liberate them. Hostages must be shot. Massacres must be undertaken. Why? Because the other side started it first.... Everyone in a nationalist war speaks in the language of fate, compulsion and moral abdication."

A global nation?

Would a world government be the answer to all the ethnic strife and tribal wars of the world? Should the "global village" not become one global nation in the interest of peace and prosperity? Since we already have a world economy, does it not make sense to have world taxation and world justice, and would these not lead to world peace? Some people certainly believe this to be not only the answer, but also the inevitable outcome of God's move through history.

How the world will actually be configured when Jesus comes back to earth "like a thief in the night" but also "coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30 NIV) will be anyone's guess. It is certain, however, that his second coming, like his first coming, will be different than expected. God has a marvellous way of surprising us, and only in hindsight will our darkened vision of the world clear as we meet God "face to face."

Meanwhile, I have spent more than another 12 years of my life back in Canada. As I write this it is Canada Day, July 1, 1999. My neighbor has hung out Sheila Copps' free flag for the occasion.

Fireworks, sounding like artillery fire, help to create a festive mood. I feel at peace.

Judy Cook is a therapist with the Salem Christian Health Association in Hamilton, Ont.

Patriotism: An American view

Marian Van Til

I exist virtually every day of my life in a binational world. I sometimes joke it makes me feel like a split personality.

I spent the first 21 years of my life in the U.S.; I lived in Canada for 16 years after that; then I moved back to the States, but retained (to the present) my job and community of friends and fellow Christians in Canada. My ongoing border-hopping gives me an unusual perspective, I think, from which to judge relations between Canadians and Americans and our two countries.

On July 1, Canada Day, the St. Catharines-based regional-Niagara symphony chorus of which I'm a member sang at the Canadian/American International Friendship Festival. The festival is held annually in Fort Erie, Ontario, and Buffalo, New York, from July 1 through July 4. The orchestra played and we sang songs, popular and folk, from each country – and of course "O Canada" and "The Star Spangled Banner." We had great fun (though we almost got rained out, and had to curtail the program by two numbers – the numbers happened to be Canadian folk songs).

Patriotism in my family was tempered by a sure knowledge that there is a greater Kingdom to which we owe ultimate allegiance.

A handful of the nearly 100 chorus members were born in the U.S., but I'm the only member who currently lives there. During an afternoon break, two other chorus members and I stood at the edge of the Niagara River, feet firmly planted in Ontario while gazing at the Buffalo skyline a few hundred yards across the river.

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No strong feelings

One of my companions, a Christian Reformed Dutch immigrant said, "You know, I've always kind of envied you Americans your patriotism. You get *excited* about your country. I can't get excited about Canada in the same way." She did have strong feelings of patriotism about the Netherlands when she lived there, she admitted. But somehow, though she feels at home in Canada, her adopted country doesn't evoke those kinds of feelings in her. Our other companion, also a Dutch immigrant, said that's not his experience. He's proud to be a Canadian, and was enjoying the fact that the concert and the festival presented a way to show it.

The truth is, I told my first companion, I don't consider myself a "patriot," exactly; never have.

While I would never relinquish my U.S. citizenship, I admitted, I should have gotten dual citizenship when I lived in Canada and the getting was good. I often find myself in a position of defending the U.S. to Canadians and defending Canada to Americans, so maybe I'm the best possible candidate for dual citizenship (or perhaps it should be "duel" citizenship!)

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Old world gone

Maybe I mean I'm not a "patriot" by old American standards. I say "*old* American standards" because after the searing collective trauma of Vietnam and disillusionment of Watergate, no thinking American can any longer be a World War Two or Eisenhower-era patriot. Many Canadians, I think, don't seem to understand that, because American patriotism still seems quite overt to them.

And that's not to say that there are not Americans, especially on the political right, who don't exhibit excessive, even rabid, national zeal, and do so quite publicly. But they are not the norm. In all my life I have never personally run into such an American, the Canadian media's pictures of such "Americanism" notwithstanding.

Though I grew up during the Eisenhower era, and was perplexed and a little afraid of all the Cold War bomb-shelter talk, even during childhood I remember being somewhat reticent about "flag waving." Patriotism in my family was tempered by a sure knowledge that there is a greater Kingdom to which we owe ultimate allegiance – as it should be in all Christian families, wherever they live. (But my relatives were not necessarily as aware of that as we were in my immediate family.) The local Christian school hosted a 4th of July picnic, with fireworks, for the whole town, but it was simply fun, with fewer specific expressions of patriotism than that festival at which our chorus sang.

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Defining a festival

Thinking about the meaning of nationalism and patriotism is an ongoing mental exercise for someone like me who straddles the border with a foot in each country. Being at the Friendship Festival made me think about what made it a festival, and what made it (or that part of it) a Canadian festival.

It was a festival, apparently, because some large number of square blocks was bombarded, hour after hour, with inescapably loud rock music; there were carnival rides; numerous food and drink stands (no beer until evening, and then in a very controlled setting); clothing vendors; a blocks-long row of arts and crafts stands; and our concert that evening.

It was Canadian because this "festival" was on Canadian soil; Canadian goods were being sold; because on the 1st the fireworks were shot from the Canadian side of the river; and because (best reason) part of the binational concert program was by demonstrably Canadian composers. I doubt the American part of the festival on the other side of the river was much different (fireworks from the U.S. side on July 4, of course).

Instead, on July 4 – for the first time in my life on that date – I would be in the environs of Washington, D.C. I must admit I found that thought compelling. I wanted to go down to the Mall, where every year thousands gather and there's a concert in front of the Washington Monument during part of which rousing fireworks are shot off to rousing music non-stop for close to half an hour.

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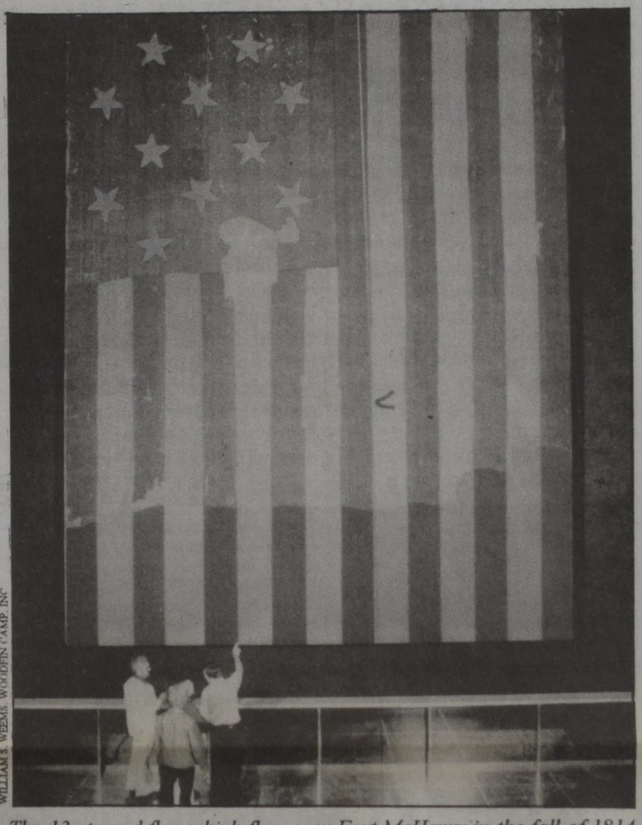
An ongoing experiment

For reasons I can't fully explain, it was appealing to be, on Independence Day, at the geographical, historical and heart centre of what a British friend of mind, in an e-mail message, called "our former colonies' ongoing experiment in republicanism." But the heat wave that had wrapped the East Coast in woollens in July deterred us, and we expressed our "patriotism," instead, by staying in the suburbs to watch, in air-conditioned comfort, the Women's World Cup quarter-final between the U.S. And Brazil; and by rooting for the home team.

Fireworks and festivals, though fine, benign outward expressions, aren't the centre of true patriotism, of course (nor are soccer games, for that matter). Patriotism lies in exercising your civic duties in the land in which God has placed you; in caring about your country's political processes, the issues it – and you with it – faces. Along with that, promoting social justice in your land can be seen as a patriotic act.



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The 13-starred flag which flew over Fort McHenry in the fall of 1814 and inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star-Spangled Banner." The 15-metre long flag hangs in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington. Key's poem, set to music by John Stafford, became the American national anthem in 1931, though it was used by the U.S. Army and Navy long before that.

It lies in knowing you couldn't give up your citizenship, even for another country you're very fond of, because some indefinable something deep within you would make you feel like a traitor.

It lies in knowing your country's history, which helps you understand its present.

It lies in being willing to help correct it when it's on the wrong path. Patriotism has been, but must not be, as Dr. Johnson said in the 18th century, "the last refuge of the scoundrel."

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Being the elephant ain't easy, either

Despite my fellow chorister's comments, I often find it hard to be an American. If Canada has often been said to *lack* a distinct national identity, defining itself in terms of what it is not, perhaps the U.S. has too much a national identity – which causes Canadians to stereotype American patriotism as rabid and excessive. When your country is a, or perhaps *the*, major world power, you come in for a lot of criticism, some of it (and at given times, much of it) deserved, of course. But because your country's influence stretches so far, you become the world's whipping boy, right or wrong. Perhaps that's a kind of perverse, inverse reaction to the perception that Americans believe in their country, right or wrong.

Pierre Trudeau has said it's difficult to be the mouse who has to sleep next to the elephant.

I sympathize; but it's also difficult being the elephant. I constantly encounter the gut-reaction perception that we Americans think our country, culture, products, science, technology, political structures (and whatever else) are the best in the world; that we care nothing about what's happening in other countries; that we believe our country has a right to dominate all others; that we are hypocritical about liberty; that we are arrogant.

It's rather like being a member of a family with a certain "mixed"

Continued on page 18...

Patriotism

Patriotism: An American view

... *continued from page 17*

reputation, the unsavory parts of which have grown to mythical proportions and which become enlarged with stereotypes. You can't do much about it, except point out the stereotypes when the opportunity arises.

I don't encounter these attitudes from individual Canadians so much as in the Canadian media, some subtly stated, some quite blatant. The irony is that the Canadian writers, commentators and broadcasters who uncritically embrace the American stereotype are themselves working from out of a kind of nationalism which they find extremely distasteful in the country and its citizens they criticize.

The American media often ignores Canada (less so than it used to), a niggling, legitimate annoyance to Canadians. But there's another side: I've frequently thought that if American writers and columnists said the kind of all-knowing and negative things about Canada/Canadians that are regularly written and assumed in Canada about Americans/the U.S., there would be howls of protest (rightly!) among Canadians.

There are some ongoing vexations in Canadian/American relations. But I hope that most of us would agree we're fortunate to have each other as neighbors. Nationalism is an increasingly thorny issue. While merely irritating at times in the Canadian/American context, recent world events have shown how deadly nationalism-turned-civil-religion can be when unbridled.

I suggest we thank God for the blessings of country and place – whichever country and place it is; that we pray for a fine-tuned biblical understanding of our duties in that place and look forward to that day when all the peoples and nations will praise him (Psalm 67).

Marian Van Til immigrated from the Chicago area to Ontario in 1975 to teach music at the Christian schools in St. Catharines. In 1984 she began working for Christian Courier. *She and her husband moved to Lewiston, N.Y., in 1990 from where she daily commutes to work at CC, and from where she can scrutinize General Isaac Brock's permanently outstretched arm atop his monument just "over the River."*

MARIAN VAN TIL

Fort McHenry (Baltimore, Md.), as seen from the deck of a two-masted clipper in Chesapeake Bay two weeks ago. The fort flies a replica of the "star-spangled banner" Francis Scott Key saw flying over the fort during the British bombardment of September 13, 1814. The flag contains 13 stars, one each for the original 13 colonies/states.

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Rising out of the ashes

Bonnie' s experience in finding her authentic self

Debbie Davis

When you see Bonnie walking down the street, she appears to be a successful woman in her late 30s. Well-adjusted and vital. Intelligent. Greets you with a beautiful smile and warm blue eyes. The type of woman who knows what she wants and how to make it happen.

At present, Bonnie is happily married to Tony (not his real name), a man of French-Italian descent. About a year ago Tony and Bonnie bought a large house in a new subdivision, which they have quickly transformed into a friendly, inviting home, often filled with family and friends. Bonnie is very active within her profession: serving on a board of directors; working as chief editor of a professional newsletter; involved in various educational and other committees within the community. Besides operating her own business, she assists her husband in his part-time computer business.

One may wonder how Bonnie emerged from the ashes of being a sexual abuse victim to the point of being able to attain a deeply satisfying and challenging lifestyle.

One may wonder how Bonnie emerged from the ashes of being a sexual abuse victim to the point of being able to attain a deeply satisfying and challenging lifestyle. Recent literature on childhood sexual assault recognizes the importance of a victim's having been able to connect with at least one person who truly cared, and was significant to the victim during the time the abuse was taking place.

In her work *Resilient Adults,* Gina O'Connell-Higgins claims that a victim's ability to connect with another individual was the crucial identifying factor which made the difference between languishing in despair and going on to leading a highly productive life.

Early thread of connectedness

After piecing together the threads of Bonnie's dismal past, a psychiatrist asked her, "Was there anyone who really loved you and you were able to connect with as a child?" Puzzled by this question, Bonnie asked the psychiatrist why this information was important to him. The psychiatrist answered, "You are so emotionally healthy, considering what you have been through."

Bonnie told this psychiatrist of how she found an elderly neighbor who befriended her in her pre-elementary school years. Mrs. Billeter always treated her with respect and was truly interested in talking to the child. Visits often involved juice and cookies, a rare treat for her.

In her second year of school, Bonnie also connected well to her teacher, Mrs. Robinson. At that time, Bonnie was placed in a school for the mentally handicapped. Mrs. Robinson spent extra time with the child during lunch hours, so that within a year, Bonnie was ready to enter a mainstream school system.

Bonnie already saw herself as "different" and perhaps as mentally retarded. She responded academically through the steady encouragement and support of a teacher who instinctively knew that this student did not belong in her classroom.

Support through 'individuation'

Bonnie learned to cope with her dismal life circumstances by pouring herself into her homework and sneaking classics from the library to read. When the possibility of continued education was closed to her, she received assistance from a young professional couple who literally helped her run away from home and opened their home to her.

This couple spent the summer of 1979 providing a vulnerable 19-year-old with a crash course on the basics of life. This type of learning included how to handle a bank account, how to budget, purchase updated clothing and acquire some of society's basic social graces.

While attending college Bonnie worked part-time at a nearby retirement facility. Her supervisor took the young student under her wing and eventually "adopted" her as one of her own grandchildren. According to Bonnie, "Gram" played a pivotal role in providing a sense of connectedness in more typical familial relations. Over the next 20 years, Gram exhibited unfailing support: from showing up at the hospital with a huge bouquet of flowers to traveling six hours so that she could attend Bonnie's university graduations.

COURTESY DEBBIE DAVIS

Debbie Davis

At college, Bonnie met a classmate with a very mature faith perspective and who was the eldest child of a loving family. Bonnie often depended on this friend for advice about practical matters, and on how to integrate Christian faith with a congruent lifestyle. This female friend walked with Bonnie for over two decades: testifying for the court system on her behalf, and more recently serving as matron of honor at her wedding.

Post-traumatic stress reactions

Ironically, once the survivor of childhood sexual abuse is out of immediate danger and has carved out some type of life out for herself, she decomposes. This concept is aptly explained by Miriam Greenspan in her book *A New Approach to Women and Therapy.* In Greenspan's opinion, the appearance of being a strong woman may be a protective strategy against a fragile view of the self until the abuse experience has been incorporated into the woman's life.

Bonnie had functioned adequately for some years as a registered nursing assistant who worked with chronically ill and palliative care patients. She says that she enjoyed her work and was well-liked by patients and staff. However, in retrospect, she admits that she led a very restrictive lifestyle, having sufficient energy only for therapy and for work.

In this stage, the typical client psychologically defends herself at all costs. In the groundbreaking book entitled *Courage to Heal,* authors Ellen Bass and Laura Davis describe this situation as the survivor being out of touch with her feelings yet hyper-vigilant of her surroundings. This type of defense mechanism can only be continued for a finite period before typical post-traumatic stress symptoms begin to surface. Some of these include: nightmares, sleeplessness, night-terrors, weight loss or gain, lack of concentration, depression and thoughts of suicide.

The need for boundaries

When survivors of childhood sexual abuse were first noticed by the helping professions in the early 1980s, clients were encouraged to tell all and get in touch with their angry and vengeful feelings. Therapists often expected clients to share their childhood experiences in the first session.

Facilitators soon discovered that this type of format taught clients poor "boundary control" and became a forum in which client reactions could not be contained. During one of these group sessions, Bonnie recalls herself hyperventilating uncontrollably.

Current treatment espouses the approach of Yvonne Dolan as described in her work *Resolving Sexual Abuse.* Dolan emphasizes the importance of boundary-setting prior to working through past trauma. Some of this boundary work includes practical aspects such as teaching the client about the concept of flashbacks.

When Bonnie had her first flashback, she had no idea what was going on. In this situation, the flashback contained scenes of a serious crime. While in the flashback state, the client experiences the situation so vividly and intensely that it feels as if the situation has just occurred. Not knowing how to make sense of her experience, Bonnie reported a crime to the local police, which they were unable to substantiate. The punitive approach assumed by the local authorities in reaction to this caused her considerable secondary trauma.

Need feedback

Another aspect of boundary-setting includes teaching the client the difference between socially acceptable and inappropriate behavior. In her work *Trauma and Recovery,* Judith Herman explains that some therapists have been guilty of prematurely labeling clients as "manipulative" without fully appreciating the depths of childhood deprivation. At one point, Bonnie felt stuck in her therapy. In reaction, she pleaded to

Continued on page 20...

Rising out of the ashes

...continued from page 19

be given feedback, and for the therapist to assume the role of teacher in terms of social relations.

For victims of childhood sexual abuse, the spiritual dimension of healing is a lengthy and complex process, especially for those exposed to religion. In her book *Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches*, Carolyn Holderead-Heggen eloquently explains why a biblical concept like the body being a temple of the Holy Spirit is a threatening concept to the incest victim.

Spiritual questions

From the very first time the child is inappropriately touched, the soul and spirit of the child sustains an unspeakable level of damage. The child reacts by incorporating shame into her faith by thinking: "The Holy Spirit would not want to live in my filthy body." More typically, a child will subconsciously assume the blame for the incest as a way to regain control of her chaotic world. Bonnie states that as a child, she felt like a fraud attending church.

Bonnie's first level of awareness that the source of the problem was outside of herself occurred when she was assigned two Christian detectives while her case was considered by the justice system. These detectives validated her sense of confusion as a result of the stark incongruence between pious words and the cruel acts perpetrated against her. These officers exhibited the Christian walk by treating her with respect, telling her why they believed her, being honest about the shortcomings of the legal system, and being sensitive and caring throughout the entire process.

> ***Assisting a client out such a deep web of evil can make the therapist vulnerable to vicarious trauma also known as secondary trauma***

After reading Scott Peck's work *People of the Lie*, Bonnie was able to appreciate that the web of evil surrounding her was much larger than herself. She then sought out spiritual counseling, initially from an Anglican priest, then later from a psychotherapist who was able to combine Bonnie's spiritual self with psychotherapeutic issues.

This insightful and courageous therapist learned to draw on the expertise of her colleagues as well as other spiritually gifted individuals. Much of the spiritual work was completed with the use of prayer and the active renunciation of evil as discussed by Neil Anderson and Steve Russo in their work *The Seduction of Our Children*.

Assisting a client out of such a deep web of evil can make the therapist vulnerable to vicarious trauma also known as secondary trauma. According to a highly respected local psychiatrist, Dr. Nancy Price-Munn, this type of reaction is normal and inevitable. The trauma is a natural outcome of empathy.

The ability to truly connect with the client can lead to the therapist's own undoing. Not only does the responsible therapist find ways to protect herself from this, but victims of sexual abuse tend to respond well when helpers clearly delineate their boundaries. This concept also applies to friends or loved ones of the survivor.

Bonnie states that when her therapist and her friends were able to state their limitations, she felt relieved because this meant she did not have to worry about taking care of them. This type of boundary-setting also taught her to become aware of, and eventually respect, her own limitations. She says that feelings of hurt and anger were evoked when others were offended by something she had done yet chose not to talk about it to her. If she heard of the concerns of others through a third party, this negatively affected her ability to trust others.

Physical manifestations

The common complaint in most cases of sexual abuse is the lack of physical evidence. But a local psychotherapist and family physician, Dr. David Cree, comments, "Perhaps the physical evidence is staring us in the face but we do not recognize it."

In 1982, Bonnie's urologist wondered outloud why a 22-year-old woman had a history of chronic bladder infections caused by a prolapsed bladder, more typically found in post menopausal mothers.

In 1989, Bonnie had surgery to remove painful scar tissue as a direct result of lacerations sustained during the time of her victimization. She was able to indicate the source of this problem and was provided with compassionate care. The surgery took two hours longer than anticipated.

At a follow up visit, the surgeon asked her, "Why didn't you tell me that it was this bad?" In that same year she was diagnosed with an auditory perceptual problem and dyslexia, which impedes learning. When directly asked if these learning disabilities had anything to do with Bonnie's childhood experiences, the psychologist who assessed her replied, "Her childhood experiences have everything to do with her learning disabilities."

More recently, Bonnie underwent a total hysterectomy as a result of fibroid tumors and a pelvic infection that had become systemic. Just before this surgery she was given a promise ring from Tony. The couple had hoped to be able to give birth to at least one child, knowing that it would be loved and well cared for.

At present, Bonnie has several other chronic conditions including asthma, arthritis and peptic ulcers. These conditions are not caused by abuse, but symptoms are exacerbated through the premature wear and tear of her body. She has worked hard to overcome as many obstacles in her life as possible, and has reached the point of graciously accepting her physical limitations.

She finds pleasure in everyday tasks such as cleaning her house or working in her garden. She also acknowledges that there are wounds that never totally heal, such as the total loss of contact with her family of origin in the last decade. According to the criteria set out by Yvonne Dolan in her work *One Small Step*, Bonnie has found her authentic self and moved beyond trauma and therapy towards a life of joy.

You may wonder how I as the author of this article know so much about Bonnie. I am Bonnie's friend and companion. I have known Bonnie for a long time.

I am Bonnie.

Debbie Davis is a psychotherapist who works in private practice in Hamilton, Ontario.

FROM COAST TO COAST

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Back to God Hour

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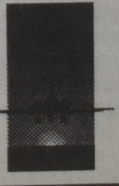

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Comment

Glass ceilings and downsizing in the '90s

Two Under 35

Elizabeth Salomons
egs@smartt.com

Dirk Schouten
dbschouten@netscape.net

Dear Dirk:

You know, Dirk, when I was completing my BA, I took the courses that I was interested in, and didn't really worry about whether they would help me get a job, establish myself in a career, or up my GPA [grade point average]. I'm an avid reader, so English and history were high on my list; plus I took a smattering of philosophy and the few core requirements I didn't have any choice about to give me my well-rounded liberal arts education. All great preparation for the field I ended up in: publishing.

There's a prevailing negativity that permeates the office — "low morale," everybody calls it — that I know isn't exclusive to publishing, but seems to be characteristic of our times.

However, I often wish I had taken more than the one required social science. One teeny, measly course in psychology is all I've had. Naturally, we can't all specialize in everything. But I often feel so ill-prepared to deal with the people I work with every day.

Contrary to what a lot of people might think, editing isn't about hiding in a corner with a pencil and reading manuscripts. It's more like eight hours of conflict resolution. Creative people feel strongly about their work, and when you are dealing with three or four people who all have a stake in the end product, you have a lot of differing opinions to bring to a consensus.

I've been doing this work for 10 years and I enjoy it a great deal. In fact, I enjoy the "people aspect" of my job sometimes a lot more than the books I get to edit. That's saying something for me, a life-long bookworm.

Lately, though, I've been thinking a lot about what it means to work with a team of people who don't share the same values and faith as I do. There's a prevailing negativity that permeates the office — "low morale," everybody calls it — that I know isn't exclusive to publishing, but seems to be characteristic of our times. (Or is it?) I'm talking about having less time and money to complete the same work, and fewer people to do it. Frozen wages. The infamous "glass" ceiling, where there's nowhere to go but out, rather than the traditional promotion for work well done. Downsizing. Restructuring. All those nifty '90s words.

The reality is, work can really be disillusioning. They don't prepare you for that in school, you know. You're so caught up in getting the right training to get the right job that when you finally get out there in the work force, you're just glad to have a job. In some cases, you've spent years training for that job: high school, community college, university, whatever.

I mentioned I work with a team of people. That seems to be the end-of-this-century management fad: organize your workers into teams and pretend they get along. Sometimes it works. And it can be really exhilarating when you finish a project and you celebrate your accomplishments as a team.

But often it doesn't work. And this adds to the negativity I mentioned earlier. I grew up in a home where compromise and give-and-take were fundamentals to getting along. And if you didn't agree with someone, you worked it out. You talked about it. In the workplace, it should be the same way, but often it ends up somebody comes to you to complain about a co-worker, or people hide behind their voice-mail or neatly typed e-mails to avoid facing a co-worker face-to-face. And I often find myself thinking about Matthew 18, where Jesus tells you to go talk to your brother or sister before bringing others into the conflict. Maybe that's all the psychology I need for my job.

Looking forward to my summer vacation,
Elizabeth

Dear Elizabeth,

Greetings from Ontario and a much belated Happy Canada Day. It's great to be back after a year in Asia. Canadians might not be perfect, but at least we're free. Frrreeeeeeeeee!!

Umm, er — sorry. Anyway, I know what you're saying about work — and offices. Dealing with people can be frustrating when they're too timid to take risks and would rather hide behind artificial forms of communication than talk face-to-face.

I get this a lot in Korea, where the culture is set up so that people often hide their true feelings. As well, I worked in an office for five summers and what I remember the most is how so few people were "real." Fake smiles and silent alliances were stock artillery for just about everyone, management included. It drove me up the wall (well, actually it wasn't a wall but rather a pole in the middle of the office through which all the computer lines ran).

Although I don't have any answers, I'm pretty sure being genuine and avoiding cynicism pays off in the long run. Authenticity doesn't exactly run rampant on this side of heaven, but cynicism does; and if you can have one and avoid the other, well, who knows what would happen? But that requires a lot more than just patience. You really gotta care about everyone involved, no matter how they behave. That's something very few people can do. But if you can, people will notice.

You also touched on another issue: whether to go to school to get a job or to get an education. That's a biggy, so I'll write about that next time.

Have a good vacation, whatever you're doing. I want to stay home and save money, but Pete is pressuring me to go with him on a road trip to Las Vegas and California. I said a few cynical things about Las Vegas, but Pete believes two skinny Dutch guys can go to Vegas and have a genuine good time.

Dirk

Elizabeth Salomons is a freelance writer who lives in Vancouver. Dirk Schouten teaches literature and writing at Kosin University in South Korea.

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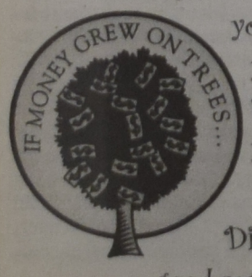

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News Comment

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

TIME **MAGAZINE** polled 1,172 kids between the ages of 6-14 in 25 American cities and found out some good news about them: 95% believe in God; 79% look up to parents and 19% to grandparents; between the ages of 6-8, 73% pray; between the ages of 9-11, 81% do, as do 84% of 12-14 year olds. I remember praying fervently in Grade 3, at age 8 , that I would be able to recite my required (sung) psalm each Monday morning. Consequently I still know scores of the Dutch psalms, even now, more than 60 years later.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS Mozart was a genius. He died at the tender age of 35 (1756-1791). Imagine if he had lived as long as Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750): the world of classical music would have been even richer than it is now. Mozart's music has intrigued researchers since 1993 when scientists at the University of California found that college students who heard 10 minutes of the composer's Sonata for Two pianos in D major raised their IQ scores tests related to math. Other scientists have used the sonata for two pianos to improve the minds of Alzheimer's patients and to reduce the number of seizures in epileptics.

The more ancient music, whether from Haydn or Handel or Monteverdi or Josquin is good for a person: somehow the good Lord has given these people that precious gift to influence future generations for the better. Do hymns do the same thing for church people? Well, singing is uplifting: perhaps the many Reformed North Americans who are still smokers have this bad habit somewhat compensated for by their robust singing, which tends to push out the dirty, polluted air from the lungs, while bringing in the sanctified air from their church sanctuaries.

HERE IS GOOD NEWS for dairy farmers. In a previous column I reported that eating eggs was OK again. Now scientists have discovered that "butter is better," the reputation of margarine being marred by the presence of trans-fatty acids, which are bad for the heart. Another reversal: no longer is wine and alcohol touted as good for the heart. And coffee? Well, there are two new books out on that topic.

Here is some info: on average, North Americans guzzle 10 pounds of coffee per year, which, at 40 cups per pound, works out to a bit more than a cup a day. But cut out the kids and the tea drinkers, and the average is upped to about 15 pounds per imbiber to almost two cups a day.

The one book, named simply *The Coffee Book*, relates the disadvantages of coffee: bad for the environment, bad for peasants and maybe bad for our bodies as well.

After cotton, tobacco and potatoes, coffee is the most pesticide-doused crop in the world. If you do drink coffee – and I guess most of us do – buy high-altitude arabicas and from growers who are kind to forests and birds: they often market their merits on the package and you'll get a better cup of coffee in the process.

The other book is called *Uncommon Grounds* and gives more a historical overview of North America's favorite drink. Both books tell the story of the most expensive brew from a Sumatran bean called Kopi Luwak, which costs close to $500 (Cdn) per pound. It is so expensive because the Kopi Luwak farmers follow an animal called a civet, a member of the feline family, which has a taste for coffee fruit. The cat eats the coffee cherry, bean and all. Eventually it does what we all do at times, excretes, having added a dose of skunk-like musk from a scent gland near its anus. Behind the cat comes the farmer with a scoop, cleans off the beans and packs them off to shippers who have managed to persuade the world that coffee with a touch of cat crap makes the best coffee in the world.

Even Starbucks does not go to such lengths to please its customers, but you need Gates-bucks to be able to afford a cup of this kind. By the way, Bill Gates is now worth $90 billion (US).

SEVERAL MAGAZINES are asking their readers who should be the "Person of the Century." In the U.S., Hillary Rodham Clinton (who is running for a Senate seat in New York State) is advocating as candidate the American soldier. "If it were not for the American Soldier, we would not have the freedom we enjoy today," she says.

Conservative commentator Rush Limbaugh recommends Ronald Reagan, "who destroyed the Evil Empire, ended the Cold War without firing a shot and ignited the prosperity we still enjoy just by removing the government's hands from our pockets." My question to CC readers: "Which Christian leader has had the greatest impact on Christianity in the 20th century, and why?" I have a few people in mind, but would like to hear from you.

THE FOLLOWING observation is strictly something that is occurring to me as I write this column on a Sunday afternoon. Johan Huizinga, the great Dutch historian, in his book "The Waning of the Middle Ages," pictures that period to end about the year 1400. The structures that have dominated the world until today emerged in those days much as we know them today: the church and state. These are now disappearing. Historical periods can only be given a label when there are definite signs that we have entered a new phase: people in the years 1000 to 1400 would have never called their era the Middle Ages.

TALKING ABOUT THE end of the millennium and the beginning of the new one, it constantly amazes me that I live in these crucial times, a time not very different from 2000 years ago when there was also a worldwide empire, Rome's, which imposed the *pax Romana*, the rule of law for an entire world.

We now have the *pax Americana* since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The U.S. now dominates the world in five key areas: political, economic, military, technological and cultural power. There are, however, two nations in the world, Russia and China, which will obstruct the U.S. and its power wherever and whenever possible. There are definite signs that an alliance between China and Russia will become more pronounced. Not yet, because both still need the West, but as soon as it becomes evident that the West is no longer responding to either China and Russia – and this will happen soon — we may well see them turn to open hostility, with perhaps North Korea acting as a catalyst.

I ONCE READ A BOOK about Russia by Hedrick Smith, I believe, in which the author asserted that we here in North America strive to attain the level of the better off and aim for a higher standard of living, whereas the Russian mentality is different: there the people will try to pull the more prosperous down to their level. If there is truth in that assessment, there is a great danger there: with Russia in a state of collapse, yet still in possession of a vast array of nuclear explosive devices, they may have the tendency to take the entire Western world with them in their disarray.

Calamities can never be predicted and always come from something that would never enter into the minds of reasonable people. We live in an irrational world where anything is possible. The only reliable given is God's faithfulness and his promise to preserve the true gospel till the End. With environmental stresses becoming more and more evident, and with social and economic dislocation caused by new technology only just beginning, brace yourself for stressful times.

THE THING THAT CAN make us cheerful – and it sustains me all the time – is that we must be faithful even when we can do so in only small things. Just this past week I bought a cordless lawnmower, made by Black and Decker, which I can charge from my solar panels, thus giving me, in essence, a solar-powered lawnmower. It works for about 1 hour and then I have to recharge it for about 10 hours. It's a beauty. Practically noiseless (just a soft purr) it causes no pollution and generates the equivalent of 5 HP. Now it is a pleasure for me to mow my lawn, which takes me two to three hours. These are "the best of times and the worst of times." For me, I find them most challenging, most interesting and curiously, most encouraging.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont. where he always seems to be busy with something.

RATES TO JULY 31, 1999

Ext. fund	RRSP
5.0%	5.25% (approx.)

Your funds will be invested in Christian Reformed Church and Christian school building projects in Canada.

CRC EXTENSION FUND

Fax: (416) 465-6367
Call: (416) 461-1207 evenings or write:
Christian Reformed Extension Fund
45 Harriet St., Toronto, ON M4L 2G1

Classifieds

Classified Rates

As of May 1999:
Note: 7% GST will be added to all prices listed below.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Christian Courier is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, eight business days prior to publication.

RATES

The cost of advertising space is **$14.00 per column inch (pci) of length**. (All columns are 2 inches wide.) This rate applies to all personal and family announcements as well as all other types of advertising, including multi-column display ads. Clients will be invoiced after publication.

PHOTOS

There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image.

PERSONAL ADS

Christian Courier would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $15 per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *Christian Courier* AND to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.

SUBMITTING YOUR AD

mail: *Christian Courier*
#4 - 261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
fax: 905-682-8313
email: ccadpromo@aol.com

OTHER INFORMATION

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.

b) Please provide us with clear copy. *Christian Courier* is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.

Anniversary

1959 August 7 1999

With joy and thanksgiving to God we hope to celebrate the 40th anniversary of our parents and grandparents:

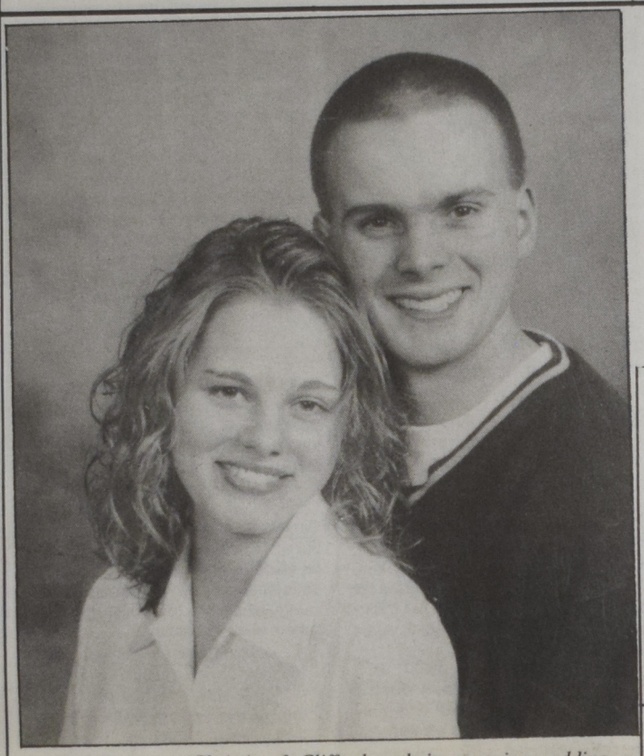
TOM & JANE HAMSTRA
(nee VENEMA)

We pray God will grant them many more years together in his service.
Love from your children and grandchildren:
Tom & Jenny Hamstra
Hannah, Ethan, Andrew, Aaron, Emma
Christina & Tony Rauwerda
Melissa, Nathan, Daniel, Joshua, Teresa
Joanne & Henry Vantil
Matthew, Ryan, Courtney, Kristen

"In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." (Prov. 3:6)

Home address: 225 Belgrave St., Woodstock, ON N4S 7K1

Wedding Announcements



Congratulations to Christine & Clifford on their upcoming wedding.

This day they will marry their friend, the one they laugh with, dream with, love!

CHRISTINE ROSANNE
daughter of John and Wilma Renkema and
CLIFFORD IAN
son of Hielke and Caroline Janssens

"They are no longer two, but one." (Matt. 19:6a)

The wedding will take place on August 7, 1999, 3:30 p.m. at Ingersoll Christian Reformed Church. Pastor D. Miedema officiating.

Future address: 204 Wellington St., Ingersoll, ON N5C 1S8

With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord, Michael and Patricia Claus and John and Gertie Adema are pleased to announce the wedding celebration of their children

ELAINE DENISE
and
DANIEL ROBERT

on August 14, 1999, at 2:30 p.m. in the Community Christian Reformed Church, Kitchener, Ontario.

Correspondence address after August 1st:
499 Albert St., Unit 1, Waterloo, ON N2L 5A7

It is with much joy that we announce the forthcoming marriage of our children,

HEATHER KOOLE
and
JOHN HOEKSTRA

Heather and John will exchange their vows at a garden wedding on Saturday, August 7, 1999.

They are making their home in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Marinus & Elizabeth Koole – Jordan Station, Ont.
Les & Millie Hoekstra – Whitinsville, Mass.

Correspondence address:
2225 Walnut Point Rd., Jordan Station, ON L0R 1S0

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Willem and Annie Bus on their 55th anniversary.

1944 August 2 1999

We thank and praise God for his continued faithfulness in blessing our parents and grandparents,

WILLEM & ANNIE BUS
(nee HAVINGA)

with 55 years of marriage. Thank you Mom and Dad, Opa and Oma for your love, support and prayer for us. We love you! As a family we look forward to celebrating this occasion with a family camp out.

With much love,
Pia & Jake Ypma
Esther & Dave, Patrick, Ingrid
Corrie & John Kamphof
Eric & Karen, Joel, Nathan
Bill Bus

Home address: 20181 Grade Cres., Langley, BC V3A 4J5

Delft Jordan
the Neth. Ont.
1949 August 3 1999

With joy and thankfulness to God, we hope to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

HENRY & CO JANSSEN
(nee WARNAAR)

We pray that the Lord will continue to bless and keep you in His loving care.

With love from your family:
Harold & Janet Janssen – Beamsville, Ont.
Christy, Daniel, Brenda

There will be an open house on Saturday, August 7, 1999, from 2-4 p.m., at the Beamsville Senior Citizens Centre (Central Ave.)

Home address: 3250 Culp Rd., Jordan, ON L0R 1S0

Graduation (Wedding)

With thanksgiving and praise to God, we wish to inform you that our daughter,

LEANNE RACHEL MAAS

graduated from the Registered Practical Nursing Program, Humber College, on June 18, 1999,
and
on Saturday, August 21, 1999, D.V., Leanne will marry

JONATHAN KLAAS FERNHOUT

son of Harry & Hilda Fernhout.

God bless you both.

Love from: Gary & Mary Maas, 7 Heather Pl., Brampton, ON L6S 1E7

Send your questions to
Peter and Marja
Confidentiality is assured.

Births

"Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his love endures forever." (Ps. 106:1)

Our third grandchild,

LOGAN HENDRIK MAAS

was born on May 27, 1999. First child for Kevin & Deborah Maas (Bouwers)

A new grandchild for Henk & Fran Bouwers, a new great-grandchild for Mr. & Mrs. M. Maas, Mrs. Johanna Bouwers, and Mr. & Mrs. E. Huizinga.

Grandparents: Gary & Mary Maas, 7 Heather Pl., Brampton, ON L6S 1E7

Anniversaries

Sneek, Fr. Orillia
the Neth. Ont.
1949 July 29 1999

With thanksgiving to God from whom all blessings flow, we are pleased to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and our terrific oma and opa,

JELLE & AAFKE GROEN

With love from,
Janice, Jim, Joe, Allan Mintum – Mankato, Minn.
Al, Caroline, Jeremiah, Karla, Amber Groen – Richmond Hill, Ont.
Rose Groen-Smit, Ed, Michael Smit – Toronto, Ont.
John, Janet, Joshua, Rachel, Elena Groen – Kitchener, Ont.

Home address: 84 Quinn Ave., Orillia, ON L3V 3H5

1959 August 7 1999

BERT & ALEDA VANSOELEN
(nee Zantingh)

Dad (Grandpa) and Mom (Grandma) have been married for 40 years. God has richly blessed them. Their wedding text was taken from Ephesians 5:1-2, "Be imitators of God as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

In many ways they have lived as imitators of God and have lived a life of love.

We thank them for showing us how to love. We pray that they may continue to live in that love and continue to be imitators of God.

Congratulations Dad (Grandpa) and Mom (Grandma)!!!!

Your children and grandchildren:
Carolyn & Martin Hamming – Smithville, Ont.
Alicia, Kimberly, Robert, Christopher, Benjamin
Ann & Alfred Kiers – Wainfleet, Ont.
Kari, Danielle, Jody, Megan, Teryl
Bernice & Fred Geerlinks – Smithville, Ont.
Adam, Scott, Jason, Jeffery
Janet & Anthony Snippe – Lowbanks, Ont.
Matthew, Rebecca, Sarah, Ryan, Mariah
Clarence VanSoelen – Dunnville, Ont.
Henry & Grace VanSoelen – Wellandport, Ont.
Colin, Kelly, Caleb

To celebrate this occasion an open house will take place on August 7, 1999, from 2-4 p.m. in the Wellandport Christian School Gym, Wellandport, Ont.

Address: Bert & Aleda VanSoelen, RR 2, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W2

Classifieds

Birthdays

It was with great joy and thankfulness to the Lord that we were able to celebrate the 90th birthday, July 18, 1999, of our father, grandfather and great-grandfather,

JOHANNES DE HAAN

His grateful children:
Bill & Julia de Haan – Kemptville, Ont.
Hilda & Bill Vedder – Wainfleet, Ont.
Ken & Bep de Haan – Nepean, Ont.
Carol & Lewis Triemstra – Kanata, Ont.
Ann & Bill Flude – Ottawa, Ont.
and his 17 grandchildren and
11 great-grandchildren (Jason with the Lord).
Correspondence address:
75 David Dr., Nepean, ON K2G 3H5

Obituaries

Receiving the fullness of life,

HENRY LOHR

has gone to be with his Lord and Savior on Thursday, July 1, 1999, in his 85th year.
Beloved husband of Alice Lohr (Vos).
Loving father of:
Ted & Ammie Stavinga
Archie & Jo-Anne Lohr
Brian & Becky Lohr
Wilma Lohr-Mills
Etta Lohr
Dear grandfather of 22 grandchildren and great-grandfather of 17 great-grandchildren.
Survived by one sister and two brothers in the Netherlands.
Predeceased by one grandchild and one great-grandchild.
Psalm 23.
Correspondence address: Alice Lohr, RR 2, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W2

Rotterdam the Neth. — Oakville Ont.

The Lord took unto himself, on July 3, 1999, at the age of 69,

WILLIAM (BILL) VANOOSTEN

"In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge." (Prov. 14:26)
Beloved husband of Mieke (nee VanDijk).
Beloved father and opa of:
Wendy & Henry Snoek – Brampton, Ont.
Ryan, Lindsay, Mark
Ron & Ruth Vanoosten – Burnaby, B.C.
Nathan, Steven
Funeral service was held at the Clarkson Christian Reformed Church on July 7, 1999.
Home address is: 1283 Grosvenor St., Oakville, ON L6H 2K3

Obituaries

Aalten the Neth. — Southampton Ont.

Feb. 11, 1912 - June 29, 1999

"The teacher is here: and is asking for you." (John 11:28)

In the early morning of June 29th, the Lord in his grace called to himself

JOHN WILLEM DUTHLER

Beloved husband of Sara Duthler (nee Den Hammer) for 61 years.
Loving father of:
Bill & Henny Dutler – Sauble Beach, Ont.
Sarie & Gordon Young – Elora, Ont.
Alice Duthler – Sauble Beach, Ont.
Audrey & Hank Boer – Jordan, Ont.
Gary & Hendrika Duthler – Edmonton, Alta.
Jannette & Ben Vanderlugt – Markham, Ont.
Predeceased by two sons, Josje and Basje, and two great-grandsons, Nathan and Jordan Plugers. Lovingly remembered by his 26 grandchildren and their spouses and 35 great-grandchildren.
John is also survived by one sister, Willemien Huiskamp, in Aalten, the Neth. and one brother-in-law, Gerrit Te Brake of Shalom Manor, Grimsby, Ont.
The funeral was held Friday, July 2nd at First Christian Reformed Church, Owen Sound, Ont. Pastor Kevin DeRaaf officiated.
Correspondence address:
Sara Duthler, 6 Lancaster Dr., Southampton, ON N0H 2L0

Opende, Gr. the Neth. — Sarnia Ont.

February 5, 1924 - June 24, 1999

"He gives strength to the weary, and increases the power of the weak." (Isaiah 40:29)

Peacefully at his home,

WIETSE (WILLIAM) TJOELKER

at the age of 75, went to be with his Lord.
Much loved husband and friend for 48 years of Wiebeline Tjoelker (nee VanderMolen).
Loved father of:
Kathy Tjoelker – Sarnia, Ont.
Will, Joe
Marg & Walt Korver – Trenton, Ont.
Dennis, Sonya
Elizabeth Iaccino – Sarnia, Ont.
Nicole, Tanya, Michael, Samantha
Linda & Peter Uyl – Blyth, Ont.
Cassandra, Jory-Lynn, Alanna, Sheree
Elly & Jim Teschke – Corunna, Ont.
Joshua, Jason, Kylie
Correspondence address:
1285 Sandy Lane, Apt. 604, Sarnia, ON N7V 4J7

We give thanks for the gifts of God's grace in the life of

Clifford C. Pitt

who left this life on July 11, 1999 at the age of 84.

Dr. Pitt served as President of the Institute for Christian Studies from 1985 to 1989. He had a distinguished career in higher education, including terms as President of the Ontario College of Art and Director of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. We count it a privilege to have shared the vision, energy and joy of this devoted servant of God.

The Board and Staff of the
Institute for Christian Studies
229 College St., Suite 200
Toronto, ON M5T 1R4

Obituaries

Called home by his gracious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

BAUKE (BOB) LODEWYK

on June 13, 1999, at 3 a.m. in Langley Hospital, at age 61 of cancer.
Survived by his loving wife, Ineke, their four sons, Bill (Kim), Ken (Trish), Rich (Carmen) and Mark (Natalie), grandchildren, Krista, Jenna, Mattea, Kate, and Benjamin, father, Willem (of Red Deer, Alta.), brothers Dick (Shirley) and Dewey (Tova), and sister Eileen (John).
Born on November 14, 1937, Bob came to Canada (Red Deer) with his parents as a teen. He met and married his wife of 38 years (Ineke), attended Reformed Bible Institute in Michigan for 3 years, served with Christian Reformed World Missions in Nigeria for 18 years and was an assistant to the pastor in various churches in Alberta and British Columbia.
He recently returned to Langley, B.C. to begin a ministry with foreign university students.
Funeral services were held on Friday June 18, 1999, in First Christian Reformed Church of Langley, B.C. In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to CRWM - Abuja Ministry Centre, PO Box 5070, Stn LCD 1, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

Teachers

SPRINGFORD, Ont.: The Springford School with the Bible is looking for a **supervisor for the 1999-2000 school year**. We use the A.C.E. School of Tomorrow system. Familiarity with the A.C.E. system is an asset, but training will be provided. The Springford School with the Bible is an extension of the Springford Reformed Church. Anyone who is interested with a Reformed background and complies with the three forms of unity is invited to apply. For information, please use the following phone numbers: 519-842-3220 (school) or 519-424-2171 (board).
Please send your application to:
Springford School with the Bible
P.O. Box 68
Springford, ON N0J 1N0

NEWMARKET, Ont.: Holland Marsh District Christian School is seeking a **part-time band teacher**. Please contact:
Henry Lise, Principal
at 905-953-8310.

Teachers

BARRIE, Ont.: Timothy Christian School is soliciting resumes for a **definite part time teaching position in Grade 6.** If you are a fully certified teacher who loves the Lord and you are excited about seeing children succeed, please direct your resume to:
Mrs. Jane Tjeerdsma
c/o Timothy Christian School
49 Ferris Lane
Barrie, ON L4M 2Y1
phone: 705-726-6621
fax: 705-726-8571
Expertise in French or Fine Arts would be an asset.

BELLEVILLE, Ont.: Quinte Christian High School, on the shores of beautiful Bay of Quinte, is experiencing growth and has an opening in the **Social Sciences and Perspectives Department**. Graduates of Christian Colleges with an Ontario Teacher's Certificate will be given preference, but a passionate love for Jesus Christ, for students and for your subject matter is essential. If you are interested in being part of a dynamic, growing school please contact:
Johan Cooke, Principal
Quinte Christian High School
Belleville, ON K8N 3B3
Phone 613-968-7870/968-6282
after June 30.

Job Opportunities

Burlington based industrial contractor requires experienced **welder/fitter** to work in a growing and fast paced environment. Experience in other areas of industrial installation (ie - mechanical assembly, process piping and sheet metal work) would be a definite asset. Some travel may be required. Fair wages and excellent benefit package available for the right individual.
Contact: Nyman Bros. Ltd.
905-634-9152 or fax resume to:
905-634-5591.

For Sale

Due to our age, we'd like to sell our small, **well established Christian family resort**. Ideally suited for a (semi) retired couple. Five quaint cottages plus owner's residence located with 900 ft. of shoreline on a beautiful spring fed lake 30 km north of Parry Sound, Ont. It has SW exposure and all cottages are close to the lake. Move in condition. Asking $225,000. For more information, phone:
1-705-389-2265. (Please, no Sunday calls.)

Miscellaneous

CLINTON, ONTARIO
ADULT LIFE LEASE
RESIDENCES

available 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call **(519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.**

Miscellaneous

The Seafarers Centre in Montreal, Quebec has an e-mail change. The new address is: seafarer@colba.net

Fully equipped luxury condominium at Cranberry Resort, **Collingwood**. Tennis, pools, beaches, golf, cycling, hiking and more. 2 bedrooms, sleeps 7. $600/week, $300/weekend.
In Niagara call 905-386-6976, or Toronto 905-877-0408.

Apartment for rent. Spacious one bedroom (two-level) apartment with lots of light. Located in Burlington, off Appleby Line. Available August 1. (Non-smoker). Call Fred or Doreen at 905-633-9601.

Your gift to the **Bert Witvoet Nearly Memorial Fund** will advance the cause of Reformed journalism and help us carry the torch which Bert has so recently handed us.

Your cheque, made out to "Reformed Faith Witness" and marked for the ***B.W. Nearly Memorial Fund*** will get you a special C.C. "thank you" and a receipt for Revenue Canada.

Send your donation to:
Christian Courier
B. W. N. M. Fund
#4 - 261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON
L2W 1A1

Classifieds

Tollendale Village

Tollendale Village, A Christian retirement community in Barrie, Ontario has started construction of its first phase.

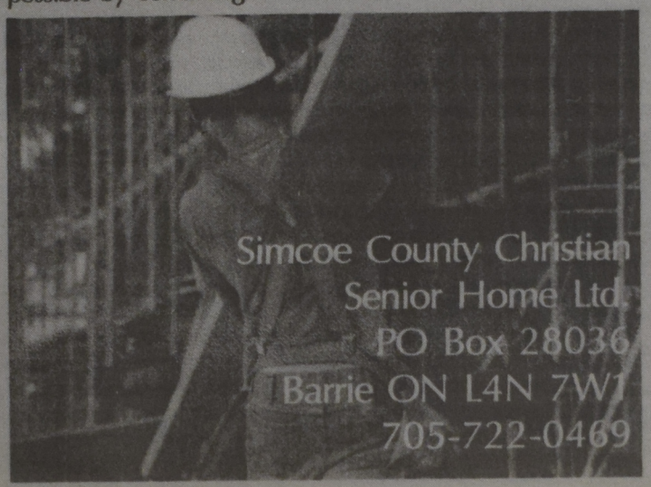
This thoughtfully planned Christian Retirement Community is situated on 14 acres of prime residential land nestled near the beautiful waters of Kempenfelt Bay in Barrie.

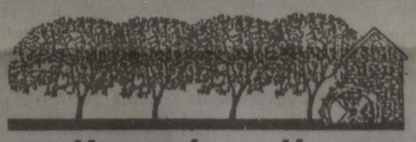
It is adjacent to a lovely, city-owned natural park and when completed will contain 300 suites, 20 semi-detached garden homes and a 70 bed extended care facility.

The first phase, now under construction, consists of a three story building housing 66 one and two bedroom suites which offer elegant living space in a variety of designs. Private balconies and patios overlook the treed valley of Lovers Creek, the large park or the stately homes of the neighboring estate community. Occupancy is scheduled for early in the year 2000.

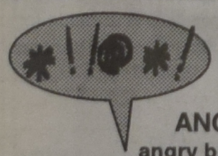
There are still a number of garden homes available as well as a few suites in the First Phase. We will also accept inquiries regarding the progress of the second phase of our retirement village.

If you, or any of your family members or friends are interested in obtaining a complete package of information on becoming part of this exciting and vibrant Christian community, please notify us as soon as possible by contacting:





Tollendale Village



MANAGING YOUR ANGER: "be angry but sin not"

August 23, 1999

Road rage – what causes anger that's powerful enough to run amok? How do your manage your anger?

Submissions wanted:

Insight: What's anger all about? Is there OK anger and not-OK anger? What's the difference? What's the biblical take on anger?

Practical: What kind of advice would be really helpful for someone who feels his or her anger sometimes gets out of control? What kind of therapy might help?

Literature: Short fictional piece, or poem, depicting both calm and storm. The winner in this category will be awarded the C.C. "Peace" coffee mug or T-shirt.

Deadlines:
Proposal: July 23, 1999
Manuscript: August 6, 1999

DRESS TALKS: but what does it say?

September 6, 1999

Don't look now – but what you're wearing is giving you away. Submissions wanted for this back-to-work, back-to-school issue:

Theoretical: What does the way a person dresses say about that person, her beliefs, his worldview?

Real Life: Dressing kids for school – practicality or peer pressure? Help our readers understand what this is about – and what to do about it!

Lifestyle: How might a Christian "dress for success"? Does the Bible have anything to say re: modern dress?

Dressing for church, or: Is the queen really coming for tea? Anything from the whimsical to the ridiculous. Win the C.C. "I can't believe I wore that" T-shirt!

Deadlines:
Proposal: August 6, 1999
Manuscript: August 20, 1999

MODELS FOR FAMILIES or: If it ain't broke, should we fix it?

October 4, 1999

What happened to the families we used to know? Are we going to be OK? Are our kids?

Submissions requested:

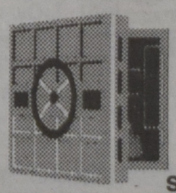
New family values: What are they? From DINKs (Double Income, No Kids) to SITCOMs (Single Income, Three Children, One Mortgage).

Insight: What are the Bible's "family values"? An analysis of traditional and contemporary family models.

Personal: "I was an only child (or, one of _____ children), and look at me now!"

Photography contest: "The Family Portrait" – a non-professional picture of your family, with 100 words for the caption. Each of 3 winners gets a C.C. personalized family photo mug.

Deadlines: Proposal to us by Sept. 4, and material by Sept. 13.



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September 20, 1999

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Not more than 600 words. The writer of each published "parable" will get a free C.C. "I didn't hide my talents" T- shirt.

Deadlines:
Proposal to us: August 20, 1999
Manuscript: September 3, 1999

Classifieds

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The goal of the youth ministry at Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in Cambridge, Ontario, Canada is to help our youth grow in Christian faith, knowledge, fellowship and service to others.

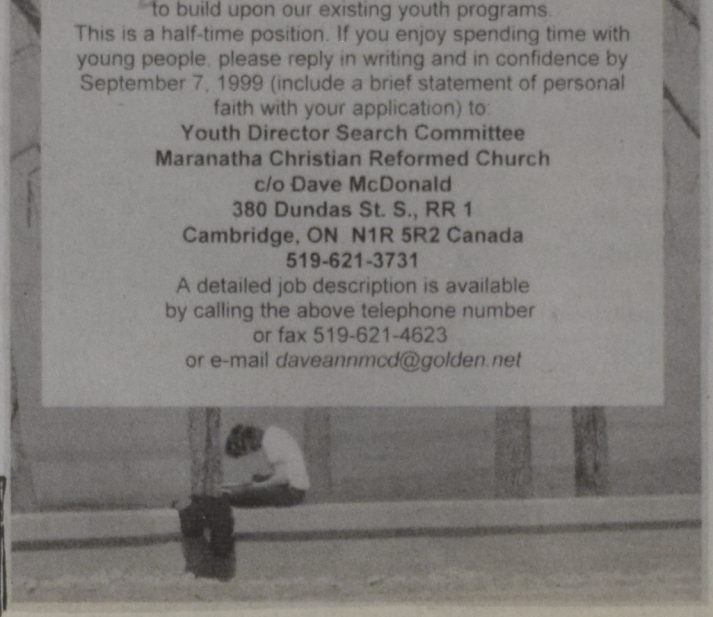
Our congregation is prayerfully seeking a non-ordained

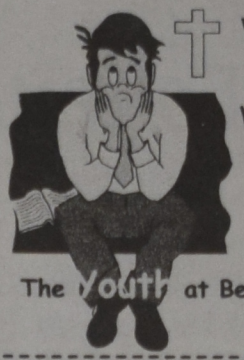
Youth Director

to build upon our existing youth programs.
This is a half-time position. If you enjoy spending time with young people, please reply in writing and in confidence by September 7, 1999 (include a brief statement of personal faith with your application) to:

Youth Director Search Committee
Maranatha Christian Reformed Church
c/o Dave McDonald
380 Dundas St. S., RR 1
Cambridge, ON N1R 5R2 Canada
519-621-3731

A detailed job description is available by calling the above telephone number or fax 519-621-4623 or e-mail *daveannmcd@golden.net*





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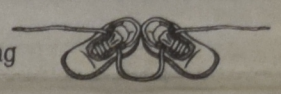

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Book Catalogue: Dutch Heritage Pages

Covenant Christian Reformed Church

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Our needs include the youth program, outreach, the church education program and possibly some pastoral work. We are willing to consider a full-time appointment or one or more part-time appointments to meet all aspects of our ministry needs.

For more information or to indicate an interest please contact Covenant CRC, 298 Parnell Rd., St. Catharines, L2M 7W7 or call Geurt Vanden Dool at 905-562-3410 or Steve Collins at 905-935-3989.

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WOODBRIDGE, Ont.: Toronto District Christian High School invites applications for a possible position as **full-time on site technologist**. The beginning date is negotiable, however it must be some time **before September 1999**. Please send resume, credentials and statement of faith to:

Ren Siebenga
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377 Woodbridge Ave.
Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8

Your advertisement could be on this page.
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The Georgetown Christian Reformed Church invites applications for
A full-time Church Education Director
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Please direct inquiries and resumes to:
Georgetown Christian Reformed Church
PO Box 45
Georgetown, ON
L7G 4T1 or e-mail:
hwv@aztec-net.com

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per line inch, per insertion.

Aug. 19	Senior Day at Lakewood Christian Campground, RR 5, **Forest**, Ont. at 9:30 a.m. Speaker - Rev. J. Hellinga. Refreshments will be served, bring your own lunch.
Sept. 12	Dutch Service, Rev. Henry DeBolster, Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, **Ancaster**, Ont., 3 p.m. (#)
Oct. 31	Dutch Service, Rev. Jerry Hoytema, Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, **Ancaster**, Ont., 3 p.m. (#)

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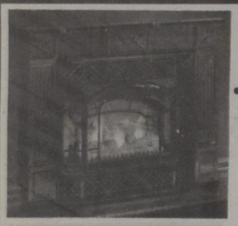

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To continue the Lord's work, the **Athens CRC** seeks a

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WILLOWBROOK NURSERIES

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Calls extended:

Immanuel CRC, Hamilton, Ont. has extended a call to Rev. Herb de Ruyter of First CRC, Chilliwack, B.C.

Zion CRC, Oshawa, Ont. has extended a call to Mr. John Veenstra, Mississauga, Ont.

Call accepted:

Rev. Ruth Hofman, of First CRC, Toronto, and **Candidate Steve Venhuizen** have accepted a call for a co-pastorship to **Grace CRC, Grand Rapids, Mich.**

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for more information or visit us at
Unit 2 - 5205 Harvester Rd., Burlington, Ont.

People who grieve need support they're not getting

CATERINE MILINAIRE

"Don't just be there at the time of the funeral – follow through," advises Melinda Van Halteren.

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. – Many people are uncomfortable dealing with grief and bereavement – especially someone else's. And too many people grieve alone these days, says the Project on Death in America (PDIA). Two Christian counsellors agree, and encourage churches, workplaces and friends to be more supportive of those who grieve.

PDIA is a New York-based project founded by millionaire philanthropist George Soros, whose mission is to understand and transform the culture and experience of dying and bereavement through research, scholarship, the humanities and the arts. A PDIA newsletter states, "Too many people in [the U.S.] grieve alone, without adequate support from professionals or other members of their community. This lonely grieving is destructive in itself and also produces fearful anticipation of a lonely death."

To improve this situation, PDIA has launched an initiative called Community Support for Grief and Bereavement, which will promote and help fund programs which can respond to the needs of grieving people.

PDIA recently sponsored grief care teams in congregations to coordinate community-based programs of grief education and support for bereaved people, started by the Foundation for Interfaith Research and Ministry in Houston, Texas.

Negative symptom

Tom Venema, a Christian counsellor based in St. Catharines, Ont., agrees that many people grieve alone. "That's one of the negative symptoms of our culture," he says. People tend to deal with grief individually "from a survival mode," he notes. There is "not enough baring of souls."

When Venema counsels grieving people, he says, "I encourage them to talk to friends." Family and church can also provide stable networks of support.

"Sadly, as therapists, we become a substitute for successful social interactions out there," he admits. Sometimes people deal openly with their grief only in a counselling session, treating the counselling room as a safe place for grieving. "They'll sit on the couch and start crying," says Venema. "That's kind of sad." In such cases, the grieving process can be "strung out" for a long period of time, because the person does not have any other place to express his or her grief.

Churches have been meeting some, but not all, of the needs of those who grieve. "I believe churches are becoming more aware in this area," says Venema. Some congregations, including his own (Covenant Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines), have laypeople trained as Stephen Ministers who can provide grief counselling. "The Stephen Ministers are there so people won't fall through the cracks or have to grieve alone," says Venema.

But he notes that some Christians push grieving people toward closure when they're not ready, saying things like, "If you love the Lord, he will heal you." Venema warns that "unfinished grief impacts negatively on church life."

Workplaces are showing more recognition of the effect grief has on employees, says Venema. "There's a recognition this impacts big-time on you." His counselling agency offers assistance programs for employees who are grieving.

These days, it should be mandatory for all therapists to be able to deal effectively with grief counselling, asserts Venema.

No platitudes, please

Isolation is only one of several problems facing grieving people, says Melinda Van Halteren, an individual, marriage and family counsellor and bereavement group leader with Christian Counselling Services in Toronto. Another problem faced by grieving people is: "Our society places time limits to grief," she says.

Some members of her bereavement groups have told her others have been supportive to them close to the time of death of a loved one but not later on. One reason for this is people are often uncomfortable talking to a grieving person about their loved one. "They're walking on eggshells" to avoid mentioning the loved one so as not to upset a grieving person, she says.

But she asserts, grieving people are "going to feel upset anyway," and they would rather talk to someone openly. "They don't want advice or platitudes, they just want someone to listen in a non-judgmental way [and] to show them love in various ways."

Family and friends need to play a bigger role in supporting those who grieve, contends Van Halteren. "Don't just be there at the time of the funeral – follow through." One bereavement group member told her, "I'm discovering who my friends really are," because they were the ones who stayed in touch after the funeral.

COURTESY TOM VENEMA

Christian counsellor Tom Venema

Van Halteren counsels individuals and support groups about grief. She tries to assemble groups of people with diverse grieving experiences because "it helps the group to bond better." Group sessions are "partly educational.... The group [members] learn a lot from each other."

Bereavement groups help bridge the gap created by society's isolation of those who grieve. Van Halteren says churches are starting more and more to see grieving as a need that needs to be addressed.

Some funeral homes now offer grief recovery programs. For instance, the George Darte Funeral Home in St. Catharines offers a grief recovery outreach program for groups, which, it states, "offers a safe haven where one can work through all the feelings of grief."

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News Digest

"Church at the Mall"

LAKELAND, Fla. (EP) — One of the largest churches in Lakeland, Florida, the 4,000-member First Baptist Church, recently bought the former Lakeland Mall, a 400,000 square-foot facility on Lake Parker. The church is building a 2,400-seat worship centre in the part of the mall that once held a Sam's Club discount store. Two movie theatres in the mall will be used for family films, while other stores are being transformed into Sunday School classrooms and church offices. The church paid $5.6 million (US) for the mall and has spent more than $2 million for renovations. The church has taken the new name "First Baptist Church at the Mall." Members can be seen sporting T-shirts that read, "I'm one of those crazy Baptists that bought the mall."

A desert in Maine?

FREEPORT, Maine — Get off the I-95 highway at Freeport, and you'll find yourself at the edge of a desert. Yes, it's a real desert, though you're not likely to find another with a parking lot and gift shop.

In 1797, the Tuttle family moved onto this 120-hectare spread and began farming it, but overcleared it and overgrazed the land, reports the *Toronto Star*. Several years later, sand started to overtake the property.

Now, the desert is owned by Sid and Carolyn Dobson, who offer tours of it for $6.75 (US). The sand seems to go on forever, but it smacks into the surrounding forest fairly quickly.

A case of skulduggery

BERKELEY, Cal. – A priceless Tyrannosaurus rex jawbone stolen in 1994 from a California university has been discovered after an international search that uncovered skulduggery in the global fossil trade, reports Reuters news agency.

FBI agents and scientists proudly unveiled the 30-cm. long, 68-million-year-old jawbone that was tracked down through a European dealer. The jawbone was unearthed by University of California-Berkeley paleontologists in Montana in 1986. In late 1994, Prof. Mark Goodwin, of the university's paleontology museum, noticed the jawbone had vanished.

"We're thrilled to have it back," said Goodwin. "This specimen is very distinct, in part because it is well preserved."